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ABOUT
CZECHOSLOVAKIA**



**Answers to the most frequent questions about
the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic**

100 ×

About Czechoslovakia

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Over the years of our activities, we have received many questions concerning our country — Czechoslovakia. Many questions are being asked in their letters by the readers of our periodicals published for circulation abroad, many during meetings with foreign visitors to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and during discussions abroad. Especially pleasant are meetings with our compatriots living abroad.

We are now providing you with answers to a hundred most frequent questions. At the beginning, you will find a brief selection of facts and figures.

We have ordered the questions and the answers so as to allow you, as you read the book, to form a comprehensive, progressively more detailed picture of Czechoslovakia. We have also assumed that on some occasions, you will wish to know the answer to a certain question, and we have therefore appended the complete list of the questions, and the pages on which the answers are given.

ORBIS Press Agency

"Can you provide some basic information about Czechoslovakia?"

CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Location

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic lies in Central Europe, extending approximately between 47° and 51° N. and between 12° and 22° E. Central European time is used on the whole territory of the state. At 12 noon GMT, it is 1 p.m. in Czechoslovakia, and from April to September, when summer time is in operation, 2 p.m. Czechoslovakia has six neighbours: the German Democratic Republic and the Polish People's Republic in the north, the Soviet Union in the east, the Hungarian People's Republic and Austria in the south, and the Federal Republic of Germany in the west. The length of the Czechoslovak borders is over 3,500 km.

Area

The area of the Czechoslovak state is 127,889 square kilometres, which makes it the 13th among European states. Czechoslovakia accounts for 0.085 per cent of the area of the world's land, and for 1.22 per cent of the area of Europe.

Surface

The western part of Czechoslovakia is bordered by mountain ranges: Šumava in the south-west, Krkonoše (Giant Mountains) in the north, Krušné hory (Ore Mountains) in the north-west, and the Jeseník and Beskyd ranges in the north-east. Slovakia is bordered in the west by the Malé Karpaty (Little Carpathians) and Bílé Karpaty (White Carpathians), in the north by the Slovenské Beskydy (Slovak Beskyds), and the Západní and Vysoké Tatry (West and High Tatras). The Nízké Tatry (Low Tatras) extend through Central Slovakia, and south-east of them the Slovenské Rudohoří (Slovak Ore Mountains). There is a large lowland, Východoslovenská nížina, in eastern Slovakia, and a lowland called Žitný ostrov (Rye Island) in the south.

Waters

Czechoslovakia is a watershed area from which the rivers springing on its territory flow to neighbouring states. The waters for the North Sea are carried into the Labe (Elbe) by the Vltava, the waters for the Black Sea are carried by Moravian and Slovak rivers which are mostly tributaries of the Danube. A part of northern Moravia belongs to the Baltic drainage area; its waters are drained by the Odra (Oder).

Climate

In Czechoslovakia, the influences of the maritime and the continental climate are intermingled. From the west to the east, the minimum and maximum temperature and rainfall increase. The long-term annual average temperature is between 9 and 10 degrees Centigrade, long-term precipitation averages 717 mm a year. There is sunshine between 1,600 and 2,150 hours a year.

Flora and fauna

Botanists have identified in Czechoslovakia about 3,550 species of higher and thousands of lower plant species. The number of animal species is estimated at 40,000; most of them, of course, are insects. Living freely are 80 species of mammals, 350 species of birds, 29 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 77 species of fish. The mammals include the brown bear, the wolf, the lynx, the elk and the chamois. Spring levels of deer run into tens of thousands, roe deer into hundreds of thousands.

Population

After the Second World War, population growth was considerable; in 1954, the Czechoslovak population exceeded the 13-million mark, in 1964 — 14 million, and in 1977 — 15 million. In mid-1982, Czechoslovakia had a population of 15,369,000, the average population density was 120 per sq. km. The population increases were due to higher numbers of births than deaths.

Nations and nationalities

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is a federative state of two equal nations, the Czechs and the Slovaks, but also members of other nationalities live in the country. The following are nationality figures for 1981: Czech nationality 9,751,000 persons, Slovak — 4,682,000, Ukrainian — 47,000, Russian — 7,000, Polish — 68,000, Hungarian — 580,000, German — 61,000, other nationalities — 53,000 persons.

Republics, regions

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic consists of two national republics. The Czech Socialist Republic has an area of 78,864 sq. km, and its population at the end of 1981 was 10,309,000. The Slovak Socialist Republic has an area of 49,025 sq. km, and its population was 5,036,000. The territory of the state is divided into ten regions: Central Bohemia (population 1,150,000 in 1981), South Bohemia (692,000), West Bohemia (879,000), North Bohemia (1,171,000), East Bohemia (1,249,000), South Moravia (2,046,000), North Moravia (1,939,000), West Slovakia (1,694,000), Central Slovakia (1,538,000) and East Slovakia (1,416,000). Also Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Socialist Republic, and Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Socialist Republic, have the status of regions.

Cities

The list of the largest Czechoslovak cities at the beginning of 1982 was: Prague — population 1,181,834, Bratislava 381,186, Brno 371,668, Ostrava 322,318, Košice 203,182, Plzeň 170,971, Olomouc 102,413, Liberec 97,628, Hradec Králové 95,651, Pardubice 91,987, České Budějovice 90,636, Havířov 89,789, Ústí nad Labem 88,634, Gottwaldov 83,969, Žilina 83,268, etc.

Management of the economy

The Czechoslovak economy develops on the basis of five-year plans, with indicators for individual years. The operative management of the national economy is within the powers of the federal government and the governments of the national republics. Enterprises are grouped into productive-economic units, mostly in the

form of branch enterprises or concerns. At the beginning of 1981, an improved system of plan-based management came into effect; its purpose is to promote intensive factors in the development of the Czechoslovak economy.

Industry

The following figures show the index of industrial production in Czechoslovakia, and the indexes of the most important branches (1948 = 100).

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Industry	132	372	665	1,181
Power industry	124	360	718	1,234
Fuels industry	112	248	403	535
Engineering industry	145	663	1,414	3,047
Chemical industry	136	577	1,534	3,325

Fuels and energy

The following table shows the coal output (in million metric tons) and electricity production (in 000 million kWh):

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Black coal	17.4	26.2	28.1	27.5
Brown coal	26.4	55.5	78.0	93.1
Lignite	1.1	2.9	3.8	3.3
Electricity	9.3	24.5	45.2	73.5

In 1981, thermal power stations generated 87.2 per cent of the total, hydroelectric power stations 5.8 per cent, nuclear power stations 7 per cent.

Metallurgy

The rising production of the Czechoslovak metallurgical industry can be seen from the following output figures (in million tons):

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Pig iron	2.0	4.7	7.5	9.9
Steel	3.2	6.8	11.5	15.3
Rolled steel products	2.1	4.5	7.9	10.8

Non-ferrous metallurgy production in 1981 was almost 33,000 tons of aluminium, more than 25,000 tons of copper, about 21,000 tons of lead, etc.

Chemical industry

Production of the chemical industry has grown substantially since the war, as the following figures show (in 000 tons):

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Sulphuric acid	252	553	1,110	1,317
Plastics	—	64	225	913
Chemical fibres	26	62	101	169

In 1981, chemical industry production included nitrogen fertilizers containing 539,000 tons of pure nutrients, and phosphor fertilizers containing 340,000 tons of pure nutrients.

Engineering industry

The following are some of the production figures (in thousands) in the branches of the Czechoslovak engineering industry:

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Lorries	6.0	13.0	24.5	45.9
Passenger cars	24.5	56.2	142.9	180.6
Tractors	10.5	32.5	18.5	32.1
TV sets	—	262.9	283.2	387.9

Other production figures in 1981 were: almost 24,000 machine tools, more than 4,000 forming machines, 4.5 million electric motors, more than 9,000 looms, diesel engines with a total output of 430 MW, 70 million roller bearings, 116 electric locomotives for

line service, 427 diesel locomotives, 985 trams, 380,000 refrigerators, 375,000 household washing machines, and other engineering products.

Consumer goods industry

The following are production figures for some fields of the Czechoslovak consumer goods industry (fabrics in million metres, footwear in million pairs):

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Cotton fabrics	147	446	501	574
Linen fabrics	51	67	71	103
Woollens	46	46	48	60
Footwear	64	96	117	128

In 1981, 586,000 tons of cellulose and 903,000 tons of paper were produced.

Agriculture

Characteristic for Czechoslovak agricultural production are results achieved in grain; the table shows the annual harvests of grain (in million tons) in five-year periods, and hectare yields in tons:

	1934—38	1951—55	1971—1975	1976—1980
Harvest	5.64	4.82	9.35	10.06
Yields	1.67	1.85	3.45	3.74

Increases in livestock levels can be seen from the following figures (in thousands):

	1950	1960	1970	1981
Cattle	4,303	4,387	4,288	5,103
Pigs	3,802	5,962	5,530	7,302
Poultry	18,206	28,157	39,187	47,388

Transport

The Czechoslovak railway network is more than 13,100 km long, with almost 25 per cent of the lines electrified, and diesel traction on the rest. The road network measures almost 77,000 km. A motorway network, now under construction, will be 1,700 km long. At the end of 1982, 400 km of motorways were already in service. In 1981, 2.4 million passenger cars and more than 350,000 lorries were registered. Czechoslovakia has a dense network of bus lines. Nine Czechoslovak cities have tram systems, 12 cities have municipal trolleybus services, and several dozen bus services. Prague has two lines of the Metro, measuring 20 km. Civilian air transport operates both domestic and international flights. Although a landlocked state, Czechoslovakia has a merchant fleet.

Currency and finance

The unit of Czechoslovak currency is the koruna (crown, abbr. Kčs), which has 100 haller. Its value is defined on the basis of gold, and according to this parity, the State Bank determines the exchange rates with foreign currencies. Czechoslovak bodies and organizations are guided in their management by the state budget which is discussed and approved by the parliament. The State Bank is the central banking institution, the Czechoslovak Bank of Commerce handles payments in the sphere of foreign trade, the Živnostenská Bank provides services for foreign clients.

The Czechoslovak Constitution

“What is the constitutional structure of Czechoslovakia?”

The first post-war Constitution was passed by the Constituent National Assembly on May 9, 1948. It enshrined legally the gains achieved by the working people in the first post-war years. The Constitution affirmed the nationalization of important means of production and the results of the land reform. It defined representative bodies as organs of state power which are not only elected by the people but supervised by the people and accountable to the people. The Constitution expanded the concept of civil rights and freedoms by socio-economic rights.

On July 11, 1960, the National Assembly passed a new Constitution which changed the name of the state to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The Constitution defined it as a socialist state, based on the firm union of workers, farmers and the intelligentsia, headed by the working class. The Constitution declared that Czechoslovakia belongs to the world socialist system, strives for friendly relations with all nations and for lasting peace throughout the world. It stated that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is the leading force in society and in the state, and codified the function of the National Front.

Some of the provisions of this Constitution were supplemented and amended by the Constitutional Law on the Czechoslovak Federation which came into effect on January 1, 1969. The Constitutional Law declared Czechoslovakia a federative state of two equal nations, the Czechs and the Slovaks, defined the division of powers between the federation and the republics, and laid down the rights and duties of representative bodies and executive bodies.

The leading role of the Communist Party

“... What does the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia stem from?”

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was founded on May 14—16, 1921, at a congress of the left wing of the Social Democrat-

ic Party in Prague. At its 5th Congress in 1929, a new Party leadership headed by Klement Gottwald was elected. This was the decisive step to the creation of a revolutionary party which by its political activity profoundly influenced subsequent developments in the country.

The Communists assumed leadership in the mass struggles of the working people for their vital interests. Organized strikes against dismissals of workers, for higher wages and improved working conditions. In the flames of these struggles, the Party won the broad support of the population. At the time when Czechoslovakia was threatened by Nazi Germany, the Communists sought the creation of an anti-fascist front. In 1938, at the time of the Munich betrayal, Communists took a stand against the capitulationist policy of the bourgeois government.

In the years of the Nazi occupation, the Communist Party went underground, and in difficult conditions organized the resistance struggle. Communists stood in the front ranks of the fighters against fascism during the Slovak National Uprising, during the May uprising of the Czech people, in partisan groups and in the army units which had been formed in the Soviet Union.

After the liberation of Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party submitted to the public a programme of deep social changes, and won its support. In the elections held in 1946, the Communists won 40 per cent of the votes in the Czech Lands (Bohemia and Moravia) and 30 per cent in Slovakia. With the Social Democratic Party (with which the Communist Party later merged), the Communists had a majority of votes and seats.

The leading role of the Communist Party stems from the historical role of the working class in society, from its position in the system of production and social relationships, as well as from its being the main driving force of social progress, not only by virtue of its numerical strength but especially because of its revolutionary character. Only the working class is capable of surmounting all obstacles in the revolutionary process and in building a new society. The Communist Party as the vanguard of the working class, as an organization grouping the most committed and most active members, is deservedly the leading political force in the state and society.

The function of the National Front

“... Its general purpose and significance are clear to me. But whom does it group, and what are its concrete activities?”

The status of the National Front is defined in the Constitution itself which says in the pertinent article: “The National Front of Czechs and Slovaks, in which the people’s organizations are associated, is the political expression of the alliance of the working people of town and country, led by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.”

The National Front associates political parties and social organizations. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is the only political party active on the whole territory of the state. Its territorial organization in Slovakia is the Communist Party of Slovakia. At the beginning of 1981, the Party had 45,453 primary organizations with 1,538,179 members. Within the National Front, also other political parties develop their activities. They are, in the Czech Socialist Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party and the Czechoslovak People’s Party, and in the Slovak Socialist Republic the Slovak Revival Party and the Freedom Party.

Also associated in the National Front are voluntary-membership social organizations, particularly trade unions, organizations of youth, women, and cooperative farmers, physical training and sports organizations, and many others.

There are about 7,000 local, district and regional National Front Committees in Czechoslovakia, with about 94,000 members delegated by political parties and social organizations. Central Committees of the National Front function within the federation and the national republics. All these committees are concerned with political, economic, social and cultural matters within their area, agree on joint conclusions, and translate them into life through members of National Front organizations. The conclusions of the territorial bodies of the National Front are a binding programme for the work of the territorial state bodies. The National Front is thus an important instrument of the people’s participation in the governing of the state and administration of public affairs.

The federative structure

"I understand the structure of state bodies but the division of competence between the federation and the national republics is not clear to me."

The federative system was introduced in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1969. The state is divided into two republics, the Czech Socialist Republic in the west, and the Slovak Socialist Republic in the eastern part of the state.

A constitutional act divided the competence between the federation and the national republics. Matters falling within the exclusive competence of federal bodies are the conduct of foreign affairs, defence, currency and some other matters. Other matters are within joint competence of the federation and the national republics: planning, finance, prices, external economic relations, industry, agriculture, transport, telecommunications, science, technology, investments, labour, wages, social policy, internal order, security and others.

Other matters are within the exclusive competence of the national republics: education, schools, culture, health service, domestic trade, services for the population, housing, human environment, forestry and water economy, and other spheres.

This division of powers is reflected also in the structure of state bodies, and the range of their activities.

The highest body of state power is the Federal Assembly, which consists of two chambers of equal status. The House of the People has 200 deputies; in the elections in 1981, 136 deputies were elected to the House of the People in the Czech Socialist Republic, and 64 in the Slovak Socialist Republic. The House of Nations represents the equal status of the national republics. It has 150 deputies, 75 each from the Czech and Slovak Socialist Republic. Passage of important laws requires approval by a majority of deputies from both republics, to prevent outvoting of one republic by another. The term of office of the two chambers is five years.

The head of state is the President, elected by the Federal Assembly for a five-year term of office. The highest executive body of state power is the federal government. The highest bodies of state power in the republics are the National Councils, both elected for

five years. The highest executive power is in the hands of the governments of the national republics.

In the course of the first post-war decades, decisive progress was achieved in the solving of the nationality question. The Slovak National Council was set up in Slovakia as the body of state power in Slovakia. Socialist industrialization of this part of the state solved the fundamental problem — elimination of the differences between the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The creation of the Czechoslovak federation, aimed at consolidating the equal status of the Czech and Slovak nations in their common state, contributed to the further strengthening of political stability and to the economic, cultural and social advancement of Czechoslovakia.

Also the nationality problem has been resolved. The act on the status of nationalities provides for their representation, appropriate to their number, in various elected bodies. Czechoslovak citizens of Hungarian, Polish, German and Ukrainian nationality have the right to education in their own language, the right to associate in national cultural organizations, and the right to press and information in their languages. In areas inhabited by national minorities their members can use their language also in dealing with the authorities.

Election system

“How are the members of representative bodies elected?”

Czechoslovak citizens elect 200 deputies of the House of the People and 150 deputies of the House of Nations, 200 deputies of the Czech National Council and 150 deputies of the Slovak National Council, and at the same time deputies of elected territorial bodies of state power and administration — National Committees. In the ten regions, regional National Committees with at least 80 deputies each are elected. The National Committees of Prague and Bratislava have the status of regional National Committees. District National Committees have at least 60 deputies, municipal and local National Committees have their number of deputies according to the population of the community concerned.

All Czechoslovak citizens who have reached the age of 18 on the

day of the elections have the right to vote, regardless of their nationality, sex, religious belief, employment, length of residence, social origin, means and former activity. Every citizen with the right to vote who has reached the age of 21 on the day of the elections can be elected as a deputy.

The voting right is equal, each voter has one vote, each vote has the equal weight. The equality of the voting right is ensured in practice so that territorial units are divided into constituencies so that there is about the same number of voters for every seat. The division of constituencies for the elections of House of Nations deputies has been made intentionally different, because here the equality of the right to vote is ensured within the republic.

The candidates for the function of deputies are nominated by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the other political parties, social organizations — trade unions, organizations of youth, women and others. A selection is made from the nominated candidates by the appropriate National Front body, and submits them for registration as National Front candidates. They come before the voters with programmes worked out jointly by the entire National Front.

In one-seat constituencies, one or more candidates can be registered, in the other constituencies, the number of candidates is the same or higher than the number of deputies to be elected. The candidate who receives a majority of the votes cast is elected.

The working man as policy-maker

“The state offices on the one side, representative bodies on the other. How does it fit together?”

The system of Czechoslovak representative bodies includes also National Committees, as elected bodies of state power and administration in regions, districts, towns and villages.

In every National Committee, its deputies elect from their midst the National Committee Council, consisting of the chairman, deputy chairman, secretary and other members. The number of Council members is usually between 5 and 18. National Committees also set up their specialized commissions, composed of deputies and other members. In larger communities, and particularly in cities,

districts and regions, National Committees use a professional apparatus of qualified persons to perform state administration duties and carry out the decisions of elected bodies.

The first National Committees came into existence during the Second World War as organizations of the Czechoslovak people in the struggle against fascism, and for national liberation and social emancipation. They express the unity of state power and administration in territorial units, and participate to an important extent in the framing of the policy of the socialist state, in its implementation and supervision. Of the 196,000 National Committee deputies, two-thirds are workers and farmers, the rest are members of the intelligentsia and other social groups.

On the one side, National Committees perform functions of state administration — keeping records of births, marriages and deaths, issuing official papers, functioning as building authorities and youth care authorities; they are entitled to deal with less serious infringements of the law, etc.

On the other side, National Committees are representative bodies because citizens elect them, supervise their work and through them exert influence on the administration of their communities, cities, districts and regions, construction work in these territorial units, their economic development, living conditions and the human environment. From the state budget, National Committees receive allocations necessary to fulfil their tasks.

Ownership of the means of production

“What is the situation as regards ownership in Czechoslovakia?”

There are two kinds of socialist ownership in the Czechoslovak economy: state socialist ownership, i.e. ownership by the entire people, and cooperative ownership, which is in fact group ownership.

In the first post-war years, the state took over the decisive means of production: in October 1945, a presidential decree nationalized all mines, industrial enterprises of key importance, and all enterprises with more than 500 employees. In April 1948, the Czechoslovak parliament passed a law on the second stage of nationalization

which placed into social ownership industrial plants with more than 50 workers, construction firms, wholesale trade firms and foreign trade firms. In subsequent years, many small private businessmen incorporated their firms into producer cooperatives. Several tens of thousands of artisans and other workers received licences to provide paid services to the population.

In agriculture, the state at first confiscated the land owned by foreigners and persons who had collaborated with the Nazis. During a revision of the pre-war land reform and during a new reform, the land of the remaining large estates was distributed. Part was acquired by farmers, part was made into state farms. In 1949, farmers began to form agricultural cooperatives to carry out agricultural pursuits on the common basis. The cooperatives were founded at first within villages, and later merged into larger units. In 1981, there were 1,708 agricultural cooperatives in Czechoslovakia, averaging 2,507 hectares of land, and 204 state farms, with an average area of 6,583 hectares. The number of private farmers in mountainous and submountainous areas is about 15,000.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Czechoslovak state sector created about 87 per cent of the national income, the cooperative sector accounted for 10 per cent, and less than 3 per cent in privately owned farms, private plots of cooperative farmers, in gardens etc.

Chapters from history

“According to their presentation, Czechoslovakia does not in fact have any national past. And if so, then German and Hungarian ...”

This interpretation spread by revanchist circles in the FRG is at absolute variance with the truth. Slav tribes settled in what is today Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia already in the 5th and 6th centuries. The state entity they created, the Great Moravian Empire, successfully repelled from 830 to 907 aggressive onslaughts of Germanic Franks. Archaeological finds in southern Moravia and western Slovakia testify to the high civilisation and cultural standard of this early feudal state. The mission of the Slav missionaries Cyril

and Methodius laid the foundations of Slavonic literature in Great Moravia which disintegrated early in the 10th century under an onslaught of the Hungarians.

In Bohemia, the decisive influence was won by the Přemyslid family which created a state which secured an important international position. After the Přemyslids died out in 1306, rulers from the Luxembourg dynasty occupied the Bohemian throne; among them, King Charles IV. (1316—1378) greatly expanded the territory of the state, and became Holy Roman Emperor. In 1415, the revolutionary Hussite movement flared up in Bohemia, as the most important anti-feudal mass movement in the Europe of that time. Czech commanders, particularly Jan Žižka z Trocnova and Prokop Veliký fought a number of victorious battles with forces of Holy Roman emperors and crusaders. International recognition was also won by Bohemian king George of Poděbrady, whose idea was to forge an alliance of European rulers to preserve peace. After his death, the Polish Jagello dynasty acceded to the Czech throne, and in 1526 the Habsburg dynasty. In 1619, at an assembly in Prague, the Habsburgs were deposed from the Czech throne. A war broke out in which the Czech estates were defeated, and thus in 1620, the Czech Lands ceased to play an independent political role, and were for the next three centuries subjugated by the alien Habsburg power.

In contrast to the Czech nation which formed its own state after the fall of Great Moravia, the Slovak nation came under the rule of the Hungarian state, but still the people retained their language, and created their national culture.

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, an independent Czechoslovak state was born after the First World War on the territory of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. In 1938, Czechoslovakia was forced by the Munich diktat to cede its border regions to Nazi Germany. Occupation by Hitler in March 1939 completed the destruction of the bourgeois republic, and for six years, Czechoslovakia was a colony of Nazi Germany. About 300,000 Czechs and Slovaks perished during the occupation. In August 1944, the Slovak National Uprising broke out, and in May 1945, the partisan movement grew into the uprising of the Czech people. On May 9, 1945, the Soviet Army entered Prague, and completed the liberation of Czechoslovakia.

The first post-war government was formed on a parity basis from representatives of four Czech and two Slovak political parties. In the elections in 1946, the Communists became the strongest political party. In the course of the first post-war years, the old state apparatus controlled by appointed administrators was dismantled, and power was taken over by people's bodies in villages, districts and lands. In enterprises, works councils came into existence through which the working class controlled production and strengthened its position. The principle of equality was applied to the relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks. The land owned by foreigners and traitors was distributed among small and medium-size farmers. Nationalization of key industries and banks eliminated the economic positions of the big bourgeoisie and foreign capital. In February 1948, anti-Communist circles attempted to change the balance of forces in the country, and provoked a government crisis which was then solved by parliamentary means. Progressive forces prevailed in this confrontation which completed the stage of transition of the national democratic revolution into a socialist revolution.

Twenty years later, in 1968, the political right attempted to deprive the people of the historical gains of their victory in February 1948. This attempt at a reversal was the climax of many years of subversive activity organized by imperialist reaction. Socialism was to have been gradually dismantled in Czechoslovakia, which was to seek foreign-policy orientation on the West, which would have upset the balance of forces between the military groupings in Europe. The counter-revolutionary attack was thus directed against the political results of the Second World War. However, the timely internationalist aid extended by the armies of the socialist countries secured conditions for the peaceful work of the Czechoslovak people, strengthened the western borders of the socialist camp and thwarted the hopes of imperialist circles for a revision of the results of the Second World War.

A lesson from history

“What lesson was drawn by the Czechoslovak people from the pre-war history and the war?”

In 1918, under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy disintegrated and on its ruins, in addition to other states, an independent Czechoslovakia was born. Although the workers' movement was very strong, it was the bourgeoisie which seized power in the new state. Its foreign policy was based on a close alliance with Western powers. Only when it realized the danger posed by Nazi Germany did the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie begin to view things more realistically, and in 1935 signed a treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union.

By the Munich diktat in 1938, the Western powers sacrificed to Nazi expansionism one of their closest allies. The Prague government did not avail itself of the opportunity offered by the Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty of alliance, and did not ask the Soviet Union for military help. Thus it betrayed the interests of the nation, and sacrificed them to the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Czechoslovakia at first lost its border regions, and was ultimately occupied by the Nazis. The foreign policy of the bourgeoisie had failed. The leadership of the anti-fascist resistance was assumed by the Communists who also suffered the greatest sacrifices.

The Czechoslovak people do not forget that at the time when their country was threatened by Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union was the only country ready to keep to its obligations as an ally of Czechoslovakia, and that the bourgeois government chose not to use this opportunity. Nor do they forget that the main burden of the war against the Nazis in the Second World War was borne by the Soviet people, and that it was the Soviet Army which drove the occupiers from the country, saved the imperilled Prague in May 1945, and brought freedom to Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak people have realized that the security and international certainty of the state and the stability of its economic development can be ensured only in alliance with the Soviet Union. “Alliance and close cooperation with the Soviet Union,” the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia noted in 1981, “is not only a revolutionary bequest for us but also our live

present on which we base all our plans and perspectives of future development.”

The peaceful life of the people and the socialist development of the country are evidence that the Czechoslovak people drew the lesson from Munich, and that historical development proved the lesson to be correct.

Czechoslovakia's ties of alliance

“What was the development of Czechoslovakia's ties of alliances?”

The foundations for the new conception of Czechoslovak foreign policy were laid already during the Second World War. On December 12, 1943, representatives of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-war Cooperation. It embodied the results of many years of efforts by progressive forces led by the Communists to lay new foundations of Czechoslovakia's international orientation.

Klement Gottwald stressed the importance of the treaty when he said: “It gives us the guarantee that Munich and everything that followed will never be repeated. Our nations who for centuries had been waging a struggle for bare existence can breathe with relief and contentedly look forward to a new, happier future. This treaty lifts from our nations the heaviest burden that they had borne for centuries: fear for their very existence.”

In the first post-war years, Czechoslovakia concluded treaties of alliance with a number of other states — with Poland in 1947, with Bulgaria and Romania in 1948, with Hungary in 1948, and later also with the German Democratic Republic.

In 1955, Czechoslovakia became party to the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance which is called the Warsaw Treaty, having been signed in the Polish capital. By the treaty, the socialist countries responded to West Germany's joining the North Atlantic pact, and to the threats of the imperialist countries. The Warsaw Treaty signatories assumed obligations of collective mutual assistance in the event of aggression against any of them. For Czechoslovakia, the treaty is the guarantee of its security and independence.

In May 1970, a new treaty of alliance between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was signed. The new document is based on the former contractual ties which are adjusted to the new historical conditions.

The Czechoslovak public is convinced that in the present-day world, divided along class lines, it is necessary to strengthen the unity of the socialist community, and to coordinate the foreign policies of the Warsaw Treaty members in order to increase their influence on world events. Czechoslovakia is doing everything in its power towards this end. The ties of alliance with the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty countries strengthened the international position of Czechoslovakia, increased its influence, weight and authority in the struggle for peace, against the arms race, and for political progress in the world.

In the spirit of peaceful coexistence

"What is Czechoslovakia's attitude to cooperation with non-socialist countries?"

The very first article of the Czechoslovak Constitution expresses the basis of its foreign policy: "The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is part of the world socialist system; it works for friendly relations with all nations and to ensure lasting peace throughout the world."

In its policy towards the capitalist countries, Czechoslovakia is guided by the principles of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. Czechoslovakia seeks development of mutually advantageous and equal cooperation with capitalist states, but rejects any forms of pressure, discrimination and interference in its internal affairs. In accordance with these principles, Czechoslovakia is developing multi-faceted cooperation with capitalist states.

Constant attention is being devoted by Czechoslovak foreign policy to the development of relations with developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America which have won freedom from colonial domination; the Czechoslovak people follow with great sympathy developments especially in those developing countries

that have taken the path of socialist transformation. Also in its relations with developing countries, Czechoslovakia is guided by the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs. In the spirit of socialist internationalism, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic supports the struggle of the developing countries against neo-colonialism and their demands aimed at strengthening their political and economic independence. Czechoslovakia intensively develops economic cooperation with these countries, helping them to implement various industrial, agricultural, water economy and other projects, and by training their national cadres helps advance their economic development.

For military détente

“What is Czechoslovakia’s stand on the issues of disarmament and military détente?”

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Government declared on numerous occasions that they are convinced of the need for peaceful coexistence and for extending the policy of détente also to the military sphere.

Czechoslovakia believes that the principal objective in the struggle to avert war is to halt the arms race and to commence disarmament, particularly nuclear. This view is based on the conviction that there would be no winners in a nuclear war, once launched. Therefore, Czechoslovakia supports efforts to work out agreements on the halting of development and production of new systems of nuclear weapons, fissile materials and launchers.

The aim of Czechoslovak foreign policy is to strengthen world peace by consolidating security in Europe. It is based on the assumption that the best solution would be the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, tactical and medium-range, from Europe. If this is not possible for the time being, it is necessary to radically reduce the level of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, on the basis of equality and equal security. Czechoslovakia therefore highly appreciated the proposals put forward by the Soviet Union in December 1982, which show the way to an agreement fair to both sides. Czechoslovak foreign policy also works for ridding Europe

of chemical weapons. Czechoslovakia supports the idea that the member states of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO should pledge in a treaty not to use nuclear or conventional weapons first against each other.

Together with the other socialist states, Czechoslovakia also seeks reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. It would welcome a reduction of the armed forces and armaments of the Soviet Union and the United States on the basis of mutual examples. It believes that on completion of this step, the forces of the participants in the Vienna negotiations should be frozen until an agreement is reached on further reduction of forces and armaments.

The Czechoslovak people are vitally interested in the preservation of peace, and thus in the creation of favourable conditions for the construction of socialist society. For these reasons, they support all peace initiatives of the socialist countries which prove that socialism is the decisive force in the struggle for international security.

Czechoslovakia and the Final Act

"... but what concrete steps were taken by Czechoslovak authorities to project it into life?"

The Final Act, signed in 1975 at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, expressed the principles by which socialist foreign policy is guided in the shaping of relations with countries with different social systems. The adoption of the Final Act improved the atmosphere in Europe, and created scope in which the efforts of the socialist countries at promoting cooperation met with a broader response.

In the second half of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, Czechoslovakia conducted successful talks and concluded dozens of economic, cultural and consular agreements with states with different social systems. From 1975 to 1981, trade turnover between Czechoslovakia and advanced capitalist countries increased by 67 per cent, and with developing countries by 82 per cent. Czechoslovakia ratified U.N. conventions on human rights, began to an-

nounce in advance major military exercises, made it possible for the firms that indicated their interest to open offices in Czechoslovakia, and expanded information activity in the spheres of economy, trade and others.

Major progress was made in the widening of contacts in science, art and culture, and between youth, trade union, sports and other organizations. The Czechoslovak authorities substantially simplified visa formalities. During the 1970s, the number of persons from capitalist states visiting Czechoslovakia increased; their total in 1981 was 1.08 million persons. At the same time, also the number of Czechoslovak tourists to capitalist states went up; in 1981, their total was 500,930. Czechoslovakia makes it possible for its citizens to marry foreign nationals, and permits visits of family members. Also, Czechoslovakia maintains extensive cultural relations with other countries.

Czechoslovakia's position in the world

“With how many states does Czechoslovakia have diplomatic relations?”

Czechoslovakia enjoys the confidence and esteem of the socialist countries, the sympathies of the progressive world, and has become a respected partner for many states with different social systems. The number of countries with which Czechoslovakia maintains diplomatic relations showed a rising trend in the 1970s. While in 1975, Czechoslovakia maintained relations with 105 states, their number exceeded 130 in 1982. Czechoslovakia's interests are represented by 112 diplomatic offices, including 87 embassies, 7 permanent missions, 14 consulates general, and several consulates.

The activity of Czechoslovak diplomacy is evident from international agreements. In 1982, Czechoslovakia was party to 2,549 valid international agreements, including 1,884 bilateral agreements concluded with 118 states, and 665 multilateral agreements.

Czechoslovakia is working with initiative in more than 60 international governmental organizations, particularly in the United Nations and its special agencies. It also participates in the activities of 1,150 international non-governmental organizations. Deputies of

the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly are active in the Inter-parliamentary Union. Very extensive are also international contracts of Czechoslovak social organizations.

About 1.5 million persons of Czech and Slovak origin live abroad. Czechoslovak authorities maintain contacts with their clubs, help them organize events to promote knowledge about their native country, cultural events and courses of Czech and Slovak, send artists to perform for them, and help organize visits of expatriates to their native country. The centres of this care for expatriates are the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations, the Czechoslovak Foreign Institute, and Matica Slovenská.

Full support for the peace movement

"Prague is said to have been the venue of the first world peace congress. I thought it was held in Paris."

The Czechoslovak capital was, in parallel with Paris, the venue of the first world congress of peace champions. The congress was convened in Paris in April 1949, to mobilize the world public against the plans of world imperialism which was creating aggressive blocs, starting a massive arms race and threatened the Soviet Union and the people's democratic countries with military force. In view of the fact that the then French government substantially reduced the number of delegates from the socialist countries, and refused to issue entry visas to the other members of the delegations, some of the participants in the world congress assembled in Prague. The session in Prague became an integral part of the peace congress in Paris.

Another important meeting of fighters for peace was held in Prague in December 1974 when the Czechoslovak capital hosted a conference of national peace committees.

Czechoslovak political and state bodies proceed from the belief that the cause of peace and international understanding has long ceased to be only the affair of politicians, and that it is the concern of the broadest sections of the population. In accordance with this, they create conditions for development and activity of the peace movement in Czechoslovakia, in which a large number of various

peace meetings are held every year — including large outdoor rallies attended by tens of thousands of people — which reflect the peaceful aspirations of the Czechoslovak people. There were also numerous successful signature-collecting campaigns, peace marches, and a peace voyage of a Czechoslovak yacht on European rivers, undertaken in honour of the World Assembly for Peace and Life, against Nuclear War, to be held in Prague in June 1983.

The Czechoslovak people follow closely the activities of peace champions abroad, and extend to them their full solidarity and support.

The role of foreign trade

“What is the role played by foreign trade in the Czechoslovak national economy?”

Czechoslovakia is a state with an advanced manufacturing industry but with an insufficient raw material, fuels and energy base. A large part of the materials needed for industry must be imported, and the means to pay for these imports must be earned primarily by exports of manufactured goods. About a third of the Czechoslovak national income is realized through external economic relations. For this reason, Czechoslovakia is interested in constant extension of its foreign trade, and places special stress on the raising of the export capability of its economy.

Foreign trade and international forwarding were made exclusively state activities in 1948. The managing and control authority is the Ministry of Foreign Trade which negotiates trade and payments agreements and contracts. Foreign trade operations proper are entrusted to foreign trade organizations. These corporations handle exports and imports of goods and services. Major foreign trade partners have their trade offices in Czechoslovakia.

The growth of the economic potential of the country created conditions for Czechoslovakia's wider participation in the international division of labour. Czechoslovak foreign trade turnover rose from 10,200 million crowns in 1950 to 53,900 million crowns in 1970, and to 174,000 million crowns in 1981.

In this year, socialist countries accounted for 71.9 per cent of Czechoslovak foreign trade turnover, advanced capitalist countries for 20.9 per cent, and developing countries for 7.2 per cent.

Economic cooperation with socialist states

“Which country is the largest trading partner of Czechoslovakia?”

Czechoslovakia is one of the founding members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Its membership in the organization created favourable conditions for development of economic cooperation with the other members of the community.

Over the years, cooperation between the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance advanced from simple barter to higher forms of cooperation. Czechoslovakia is taking part in the coordination of the five-year plans of the member states, and thus secures for itself in advance imports of necessary products, and clarifies export possibilities. Czechoslovakia is a signatory to several hundred multilateral and bilateral agreements on industrial specialization and cooperation. This division of labour facilitates concentration of capacities and large series production. Czechoslovakia joined a number of agreements on the basis of which member states built joint installations; it participated, for example, in the construction of the oil pipeline Druzhba and the natural gas pipeline Soyuz, and enjoys the advantages of the linked-up energy distribution systems.

Trade with the other member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance has become the most dynamic element of Czechoslovakia's external economic relations. Its total trade with socialist countries rose from 5,700 million crowns in 1950 to 125,200 million in 1981. Trade with the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was 116,800 million crowns in 1981, with the other socialist states 8,400 million crowns.

Czechoslovakia's largest trading partner is the Soviet Union. In 1981, Czechoslovak-Soviet trade was 67,500 million crowns, which was 38.8 per cent of the total Czechoslovak trade turnover. The list of the other socialist countries was: the German Democratic

Republic 17,000 million crowns, Poland 11,400 million, Hungary 9,200 million, Yugoslavia 7,100 million, Bulgaria 4,700 million, Romania 4,300 million, Cuba 1,400 million, etc.

Economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries assures the Czechoslovak economy of long-term supplies of fuels, energy and important raw materials. Orders from socialist states created the prerequisites for constant growth of Czechoslovak industrial production, for effective changes in the branch structure of industry, and for higher effectiveness of production processes. On the basis of specialization and cooperation agreements with socialist countries, entirely new branches of production came into existence in Czechoslovakia, for example nuclear engineering and nuclear energy industries. Economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries thus represents a mainstay of Czechoslovakia's economic development and of the social certainties of its people.

On the basis of principles of equality and sovereignty

“What is the development of Czechoslovakia's trade with capitalist states?”

In accordance with the peace principles of its foreign policy, Czechoslovakia seeks constant growth of its economic cooperation with advanced capitalist countries and with developing states, on the basis of the principles of equality, sovereignty and mutual benefit.

This policy meets with artificially erected obstacles. Under U.S. pressure, discrimination of the socialist countries was intensified at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. In this way, imperialism intends to impair the economic development of the socialist countries, and cause difficulties for them. Historical experience shows that these plans are doomed to ultimate failure. It is sufficient to recall that in 1948, the United States imposed an embargo on the delivery of a tyre factory to Czechoslovakia, and that today, there is a number of tyre factories in the world, exported by Czechoslovak enterprises, and others are under construction. The policy of discrimination turns against its users, like a boomerang. Czechoslovakia con-

demns discriminatory measures in the economic sphere. It regards them as being absolutely inconsistent with the principles of peaceful cooperation, enshrined in the final document of the Helsinki conference.

Czechoslovak enterprises are not interested only in the exchange of goods and services but also in wider forms of production and technical cooperation. In 1982, about 50 agreements on cooperation in production were in effect between Czechoslovak industrial enterprises and firms in capitalist countries.

The volume of trade with non-socialist states rose from 4,500 million crowns in 1950 to 16,200 million in 1970, and to 48,800 million in 1981; trade with advanced capitalist states was 36,300 million crowns, with developing countries 12,500 million crowns.

The following are 1981 figures for Czechoslovak trade turnover with the most important partners in advanced capitalist countries; the FRG 9,500 million crowns, Austria 5,100 million, Switzerland 3,800 million, Great Britain 3,000 million, Italy 2,100 million, the Netherlands 1,900 million, France 1,600 million crowns, etc.

Czechoslovak export

"Here, we know Czechoslovak beer and Zetor tractors, but evidently the export range is wider..."

Before the Second World War, Czechoslovakia exported mainly fuels, raw materials and products of its light industry. The post-war reconstruction created conditions for fundamental changes in the structure of exports. The fastest increases were recorded in engineering exports. At the beginning of the 1980s, machines accounted for about 50 per cent of Czechoslovak exports, fuels and raw materials almost 30 per cent, manufactured consumer goods 16 per cent, and food industry materials and products about 4 per cent.

One of the most important items in Czechoslovak engineering exports are lorries and their components, which account for 13–14 per cent of the total export of engineering products. They are mainly Tatra lorries, road tractors LIAZ, and light lorries Avia. Passenger cars Škoda account for about 4 per cent of engineering

exports, tractors for 3.5—4 per cent. In several developing countries, Czechoslovak tractors are manufactured under licence deals. Important export items are also locomotives and other rail vehicles. Textile and garment industry machinery constitutes about 9 per cent of the total engineering exports, in which also machine tools, forming machines and products of the energy engineering industry are high on the list.

Fuels and raw materials are represented in Czechoslovak exports by black and brown coal, coke and oil products. Exports of consumer goods include mainly products of the leatherware, footwear and fur branches, textile goods, ceramics, glass and porcelain. Sugar, malt and hops are the main items in Czechoslovak exports of foodstuffs and food industry materials. Czechoslovak breweries supply foreign customers with about 200—300 million litres of beer a year.

The list of Czechoslovak imports is topped by fuels, raw materials and other materials which account for about half of the total, machinery and equipment for some 30 per cent.

International cultural exchanges

"I know that Czechoslovak artists often perform abroad, but what is the scope for foreign culture in Czechoslovakia?"

Czechoslovakia is expanding cultural cooperation with many countries. Within its external cultural relations, it sends abroad and receives more than 30,000 artists and other cultural personalities every year.

The successes of Czechoslovak orchestras and concert artists abroad are generally well known. The Czech Philharmonic made a tour of the United States in 1981 where its 31 concerts had a total audience in excess of 100,000 music lovers. Also the Slovak Philharmonic, the Slovak Folk Song and Dance Ensemble SLUK, and other orchestras and ensembles have earned international renown.

Every year, Czechoslovak films are shown at some 100 film festivals abroad, where they invariably win dozens of prizes. Czechoslovak films and television programmes for children are well

known in many countries. Equally favourable reception is being given to other Czechoslovak cultural values and events; it is sufficient to mention the international reputation of the Spejbl and Hurvínek puppet theatre, of the television festival Golden Prague, and others.

Czechoslovak authorities systematically create conditions enabling the public to become acquainted, to an ever larger extent, with foreign works of art and performers. Many prominent foreign musicians and orchestras regularly perform at the international festival Prague Spring, and at other events.

Some 160—170 foreign films have their premiéres in Czechoslovak cinemas every year; they are predominantly Soviet, French, Italian, U.S. and other movies. On Czechoslovak television, foreign programmes account for almost 30 per cent of broadcasting time.

Every year, several hundred foreign literary works translated into Czech and Slovak are published in Czechoslovakia.

Especially extensive are Czechoslovak cultural relations with other socialist countries but there is considerable exchange of cultural values also with the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, France and other West European and overseas countries.

Consistently against terrorism

“What is Czechoslovakia’s attitude to the problem of terrorism?”

Communists have always been resolute opponents of terror and terrorism. Present-day international terrorism is not a product of Communism as bourgeois propaganda would like to make the world public believe, but stems from the very nature of capitalist relationships. Capitalist society is permeated by organized crime. Ever more frequently, the ruling class itself is taking part in unlawful activities, not only in the form of tax fraud and blackmail but also by resorting to violence against competitors. From this, it is not far to the use of terror against political adversaries, regardless whether the acts of terror are entrusted to criminal organizations to commit, or to agencies controlled by the government.

The social roots of terrorism do not exist under socialism. When

terrorist acts were committed in Czechoslovakia, they were always instigated from abroad. In the 1950s, terrorists trained by Western espionage agencies were sent to Czechoslovakia to murder Communists, officials of administrative bodies, and other progressive citizens. In the 1970s, courts in some West European countries handed down such lenient verdicts in trials of hijackers that they practically inspired various criminal elements to terrorist hijackings of Czechoslovak planes.

In Czechoslovakia, the criminal offence of terrorism is consistently prosecuted and severely punished. Whenever the Czechoslovak authorities have been asked for help in connection with anti-terrorism measures, they have always complied with the request. Czechoslovakia resolutely condemns international terrorism but rejects imperialist attempts to present the national liberation movements of subjugated nations as terrorism.

In the service of foreign powers

"I read something about dissidents. What is the real situation in this respect?"

The reactionary forces of imperialism are trying to halt the world-wide revolutionary process by all available means. Western espionage agencies, the CIA and others, recruit not only emigrants but also various persons living in socialist countries. They choose individuals who, because of their class interests and reactionary views, and their vainglorious aspirations for what they perceive as fame, are ready, for pay, to lend their names to various statements, letters, protests and other pamphlets which slander socialist society. These texts, presented as the voice of various "opposition" individuals or groups, are mostly produced in the offices of Western espionage services, and distributed in a coordinated way throughout the capitalist world, and beamed to Czechoslovakia by Radio Free Europe and other radio stations.

The organized use of dissidents has two aims: their materials are intended to cause uncertainty and unrest in Czechoslovakia, to impair the development of socialist society, and among the public in capitalist states, the voices of the dissidents have the purpose to

discredit socialism. It is the belief of the anti-communist centres that slander spread by the apostates from socialism have greater propaganda effect than defamation disseminated directly.

Dynamic rate of economic development

"A dynamic development of the Czechoslovak economy is asserted. Can you list facts to document this?"

The February 1948 victory of the Czechoslovak progressive forces and the subsequent socio-economic transformations created conditions for the fast growth of the Czechoslovak economy. The transfer of decisive capacities into the ownership of society made it possible to organize all production activities rationally, and to manage them in a plan-based way.

The dynamic rate of economic development is comprehensively characterized by increases in the social product and the national income. The per capita social product, calculated in constant prices, rose from 10,584 crowns in 1948 to 76,942 crowns in 1981. The created per capita national income rose in the same period from 5,686 crowns to 29,487 crowns, which is a fivefold growth.

Especially fast growth was recorded in Czechoslovak industrial production; its index rose from 100 in 1948 to 372 in 1950, 554 in 1970, 1,156 in 1980, and 1,181 in 1981. The construction industry developed at an even faster rate. Since 1948, the volume of construction work increased about 13fold. In agriculture, the growth rate of production was slower: its value (in 1980 prices) declined from 73,000 million crowns in the pre-war year 1936 to 62,000 million in 1960, but rose to 104,000 million in 1980. In the climatically unfavourable year 1981, the value of agricultural production fell to 101,000 million crowns.

Similarly, examples could be listed to show the development of other production branches, and the increasingly fuller meeting of the material and cultural needs of the people. The figures in their entirety are evidence that the path of socialist development has fully proved its worth.

Distribution of the national income

"In what way is the created national income distributed?"

Statistics for 1981 show that 58 per cent of the used national income was allocated to meet personal consumption of the population, 22 per cent for material social consumption, and 20 per cent for accumulation, i.e. particularly for investments.

In socialist conditions, the entire national income belongs to the working people. They receive one part directly, in the form of wages for the work performed, remuneration of cooperative farmers, receipts for farm products, and in other forms of income, monetary and in kind. Another part of the national income is given to them as members of society, in the form of state spending to finance their needs. There is no category of capitalist profits in the statistics showing the distribution of the national income, and it would be a futile attempt to find in Czechoslovakia citizens living on dividends from joint-stock companies, or on other unearned income.

The decisive role is played by distribution according to work; it accounts for about two-thirds of the overall real income of the population. One-third of the real income is represented by spending from social consumption funds, which are distributed primarily according to need. These funds are used to ensure the physical and cultural development of citizens, particularly their education and health care. Also social security benefits are defrayed from social consumption funds.

The equitable distribution of the national income is one of the sources of existential and social certainties of citizens who know that the results of their endeavour at work will be returned to them in the form of better conditions for meeting their material and cultural needs.

The role of Czechoslovak industry

“What is the role of industry in Czechoslovakia?”

Industry is the most important branch of the Czechoslovak national economy, accounting as a rule for 60—65 per cent of the created national income. It also creates the largest number of jobs. The industrial work force is 2.9 million, which is about 39 per cent of all gainfully employed people in the country. Industry also plays the main role in ensuring balanced external economic relations because it produces about 95 per cent of all export products.

Although the population of Czechoslovakia is 15.5 million, i.e. only 0.34 per cent of the population of the world, Czechoslovakia's share in world industrial production is estimated at between 1.4 and 1.6 per cent. Czechoslovakia's per capita industrial production is thus four times higher than the world average.

The post-war nationalization of industry made it possible to concentrate production in the largest, best equipped factories. In the course of the post-war decades, the centre of production was transferred into new or reconstructed facilities.

Planned construction and reconstruction gradually changed the entire structure of industrial production. In pre-war Czechoslovakia, the food and consumer goods industries accounted for more than 60 per cent of total industrial production. At the present time, the largest branch is the engineering industry which accounts for about 30 per cent of industrial production and more than 50 per cent of exported goods. Also the share of the chemical industry rose substantially: at the beginning of the 1980s, the chemical industry accounted for about 8 per cent of the total industrial production.

In the period of socialist construction, the technical standard of industrial production and of products increased greatly. A number of Czechoslovak machines, vehicles and consumer goods are among the best in the world, and are doing well on the world market. This is true, for example, of several types of machine tools, textile machinery, glassware, and other goods.

Energy resources

"What is the present energy situation in Czechoslovakia, and what are the prospects?"

The Czechoslovak fuels and energy balance relies mainly on black and brown coal and lignite. The largest black coal deposits are around Ostrava, where the annual output is about 27—28 million metric tons, and no substantial increases are envisaged to lengthen the life of the deposits.

Brown coal deposits are mainly in northwest and west Bohemia. In contrast to black coal, the deposits are not too deep underground, which makes opencast mining possible. The total production of brown coal and lignite is around 95 million tons a year, and will also not be substantially increased.

Not large quantities of oil are extracted in South Moravia and West Slovakia. Natural gas production is more important but Czechoslovakia has to import most of the clean fuels it needs, above all from the Soviet Union. A certain quantity of natural gas is obtained as payment for the transit of Soviet gas across Czechoslovak territory to West and South European countries.

The usable hydro-energy potential of Czechoslovak rivers is estimated at 9,000 million kWh a year. In the post-war years, a number of hydroelectric power stations were built in the country, and thanks to them, rivers provided 4,000—4,500 million kWh of electricity a year at the beginning of the 1980s. The use of the hydro-energy potential will be increased also by construction of numerous small hydro-electric power stations.

The conventional energy resources cannot meet the needs of the Czechoslovak national economy. For this reason, development of the nuclear energy industry is being pursued in a planned way. The fact is being taken into consideration that ores containing uranium are mined in the country so that the nuclear power stations will essentially use domestic fuel, improved in Soviet ore-processing plants. Under construction in Czechoslovakia are three light-water nuclear power stations of Soviet design, each with a capacity of 1,760 MW. The fourth nuclear power plant is in preparatory stages. The output of Czechoslovak nuclear power stations will increase from 5,000 million kWh in 1981 to 15,000 million kWh in 1985.

In 1981, the total electric energy production was 74,000 million kWh, and is planned to reach 80—83,000 kWh by 1985. Great stress is being placed on cuts in fuels and energy consumption.

The largest industrial branch

“Which are the most important production fields of the Czechoslovak engineering industry?”

Engineering is the largest Czechoslovak industrial branch; it employs a work force of 1.1 million, i.e. one in every seven gainfully employed citizens. In the period of socialist construction, engineering production recorded fast increases: its index, 100 in 1948, rose to 1,414 in 1970, and to 3047 in 1981. At the same time, the internal structure of the engineering industry was changed. The fastest developing fields were those by which Czechoslovakia participates in the international division of labour.

The Czechoslovak engineering industry supplies machinery and production equipment for a number of industrial branches and for agriculture. Very important is the production of energy equipment. Škoda Works in Plzeň has supplied steam turbines and powerful generators for dozens of power stations in Czechoslovakia and abroad. In the 1970s, it began production of light-water nuclear reactors of Soviet design, and took its place among the ten manufacturers of nuclear energy equipment in the world. The first two reactors were exported to Hungary, others for Czechoslovak nuclear power plants. Other Czechoslovak engineering works make steam compensators and steam generators for the primary circuit of nuclear power stations, pumps, armatures etc. Czechoslovakia was the first country in the world which filled a foreign order for components for breeder reactors. The engineering works První brněnská strojírna made and supplied to the Soviet Union a steam generator for the transfer of heat from a sodium-cooled breeder reactor.

An important role is played by the production of machinery for the engineering industry. Every year, Czechoslovak enterprises produce tens of thousands of machine tools, an increasing number with numerical control systems. Czechoslovak textile engineering

enriched world technology with a number of new products, especially jet looms and spindle-less spinning frames. Czechoslovak manufacturers make also equipment for ethylene plants, oil refineries and other branches of the chemical industry. In a number of countries, engineering works, cement plants, textile and rubber factories, breweries, sugar refineries and other enterprises use equipment supplied by Czechoslovakia.

Also the electrical engineering industry is growing fast. The annual production of electric motors is 4—5 million. Great attention is being given to the expansion of electronics and microelectronics, and to the introduction of optoelectronics. Conditions have been created for the production of integrated circuits with a high degree of complexity, also by the development — in cooperation with Soviet experts — of an electron lithography device. Computer technology production shows a rising trend. Czechoslovakia makes computers and microprocessors for the control of technological processes. Successful products of the Czechoslovak electrical engineering industry include radio and TV transmitters, and telephone exchanges.

The production programmes of Czechoslovak engineering enterprises include a range of consumer goods — colour TV sets, automatic washing machines, dual-temperature refrigerators, tape recorders and other products.

Means of transport

“How are means of transport represented in the production programme of the Czechoslovak engineering industry?”

Means of transport bearing trade marks of Czechoslovak manufacturers run, fly and sail in dozens of countries. An important branch of Czechoslovak engineering is the automobile industry.

Automobile production in Czechoslovakia is one of the oldest in Europe. The first passenger car in what is today Czechoslovakia was built in 1897 in the town of Kopřivnice. At present, the annual production figures are 45,000 lorries and about 180,000 passenger cars. Remarkable vehicles are heavy-duty Tatra lorries, powered

by air-cooled diesel engines, designed for off-road operations and for difficult climatic conditions. In 1983, the T 815 series went into production; the new lorries combine all the advantages of the previous types.

Czechoslovak automobile plants also make various special-purpose vehicles: truck-mounted cranes, tankers, lorries to carry loose substances, fire engines, special agricultural vehicles, and other types. Tens of thousands of refrigerator trucks of Czechoslovak manufacture can be seen on European roads. Czechoslovak motorcycles and tractors also have a good reputation.

Škoda Works in Plzeň is a leading manufacturer of electric locomotives. From 1958 to the beginning of the 1980s, it built 4,000 locomotives, half of them for Soviet railways. Diesel-electric locomotives are made in the ČKD Works in Prague, ČKD Tatra Smíchov is one of the largest tram manufacturers in the world. Some 1,000 trams leave the factory gate every year. Also Czechoslovak trolleybus production is an important export branch.

Successful products of the Czechoslovak aircraft industry include jet trainers and small turboprop passenger planes. The ship-building industry makes also large passenger ships for river service as waterborne hotels, freighters, tugs and suction dredgers.

Growing role of the chemical industry

"The worldwide growth of the chemical industry has certainly not been without a response in Czechoslovakia. In what way?"

The chemical industry is the youngest and the fastest growing branch of Czechoslovak industry. The production index rose from 100 in 1948 to 1,534 in 1970 and 3,325 in 1981.

In 1962, the international oil pipeline Družba (Friendship) was put into operation. It made possible a large increase in the import of Soviet crude, and an expansion of the petrochemical industry. Refineries were built in Bratislava, Litvínov, Kralupy and other towns; they process oil into various products of organic chemistry.

In the 1960s and 1970s, plants with a high output of plastics, synthetic resins and artificial fibres were built in Czechoslovakia. In

Bratislava, a new ethylene plant has a capacity of 200,000 tons of ethylene a year. In Litvínov, an olefine plant has a capacity of 450,000 tons of ethylene, 260,000 tons of propylene and 170,000 tons of benzene a year. In Kralupy, a synthetic rubber plant was put into operation already in 1960, and extended the raw material base of the Czechoslovak rubber industry.

The annual timber production in Czechoslovak forests is 18—19 million cubic metres; this quantity is achieved without full use of natural increases. Construction of new cellulose plants and factories for the manufacture of chipboard creates conditions for effective utilization of wood. In 1981, a plant with an annual capacity of 200,000 tons of cellulose was put into operation in Ružomberok. In 1983, a similar plant was nearing completion in Paskov.

In the 1980s, other structural changes were made in the Czechoslovak chemical industry. On the basis of agreements with the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia will not increase its production of some energy-intensive chemicals, and will meet its needs by imports from the Soviet Union. Instead, the Czechoslovak chemical industry will expand its production of pure chemicals, organic dyes, paints and other products.

Agriculture and food production

“Is Czechoslovak socialist agriculture capable of meeting the needs of the people?”

The area of cultivated land in Czechoslovakia is 6.8 million hectares, which means 0.44 hectares of agricultural land per head of the population, of which 0.31 hectares is arable land. In view of the Central European climatic conditions, the main products of Czechoslovak agriculture are wheat, barley, sugarbeet, potatoes and other temperate zone crops.

Remarkable results have been achieved in grain production. The annual average grain harvest rose from the pre-war 5—6 million tons to the present 9—11 million tons. At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, hectare yields were around 4 tons. Sugarbeet production is usually between 7 and 8 million tons a year, sugar production is some 900,000 tons a year; it is one of the traditional export com-

modities. Czechoslovakia is one of the world's leading producers of hops; the harvests are usually between 11,000 and 12,000 tons.

The country's cattle population is in excess of 5 million, pigs number more than 7 million; sheep-farming is also extensive. The rising productivity of animals brought about increases in livestock production. From 1950 to 1981, liveweight meat production rose from 0.8 to 1.7 million tons, milk from 3,200 to 5,700 million litres, eggs from 1,600 to 5,000 million a year.

Concentration of agricultural production in large socialist enterprises made it possible to put high-performance machinery and equipment into wide, effective use. Czechoslovak agricultural enterprises have 134,000 tractors, 17,600 combine harvesters, 42,000 lorries and other means of mechanization. One worker in Czechoslovak agriculture produces food for 17 people. Industrial fertilizers consumption per one hectare of agricultural land averages a quantity containing 250—260 kg of pure nutrients.

The development of Czechoslovak agriculture raised the country's self-sufficiency in food production. In the 1970s, Czechoslovakia was able to discontinue imports of butter, poultry, eggs, dairy products, and essentially also meat. For the five-year period 1981—1985, agriculture was assigned the task to achieve self-sufficiency in grain production, and thus to enhance overall self-sufficiency in food production.

Workers' participation in management

“... which raises the question to what extent rank-and-file employees have a say in the running of their enterprise.”

The general organizational structure of all economic activity in Czechoslovakia is guided by the principle that use must be made of all possibilities and forms which deepen workers' initiative and widen their participation in enterprise management. The characteristic feature is the unity of two goals: by their participation in management, workers further all-society objectives, and on the other hand ensure that their justified needs are satisfied, particularly with regard to earnings, working conditions, work safety and hygiene.

Collectives of enterprises, plants, departments and workshops

take part in the drafting of plans and evaluation of results achieved. The draft plans prepared by specialists are discussed not only with the appropriate trade union body but also with workers in workshops and other inner-enterprise units. The aim of these deliberations is to identify untapped reserves in the work places, and to find ways of fulfilling the increasingly demanding tasks. The results of these discussions are then formulated in the so-called counter-plans of enterprise collectives; by their fulfilment, the enterprise obtains additional funds for wages, and can raise the non-fixed parts of wages.

Trade unionists exert influence on management through their works committees which have, in a number of matters, the right of shared decision-making with the management of the enterprise. The main production tasks are specified in the collective contract which is discussed at a plenary session of all trade unionists or at a session of their delegates. The inhabitants of towns and villages can influence the activities of local enterprises through the elected municipal and local administration bodies.

Living conditions in international comparisons

“How do the living conditions in Czechoslovakia appear in international comparisons?”

Whoever visits Czechoslovakia can see that the living standard of the people is high also in the light of international comparisons.

Czechoslovakia is a country with full employment: the work force in the national economy rose from 6.9 million in 1970 to 7.4 million in 1981. The purchasing power of the population is positively influenced by the fact that they need not buy or pay for a number of things; in the family budgets, there are no such items as doctor's bills, hospital bills, and school fees. Rents and fares in public transport are low. Citizens do not pay any contributions towards sickness and old age insurance. Their pay is augmented by benefits for dependent children and other social grants.

The growing purchasing power is reflected in the high level of consumption. Czechoslovakia has reached a very creditable standard of food consumption; the energy value of the daily per capita

consumption of food is around 12,500 kJ (about 3,000 cal), meat consumption exceeded in the 1970s 80 kg per head of the population, oils and fats are around 20 kg a year, eggs more than 300, etc. Food consumption was thus about the same or higher than in industrially advanced West European countries.

Also the living standard is on the rise. About 51 per cent of all households are in family houses which are privately owned. By its housing construction — 7—10 flats for every 1,000 people — Czechoslovakia has surpassed Great Britain, France, the United States and a number of other economically advanced countries. Almost 9 per cent of families have their own recreational cottage or house. Every year, the number of trips abroad is around 9—10 million; predominantly, they are tourist trips and journeys by holiday-makers.

These and many other facts prove that Czechoslovakia has a high living standard.

Czechoslovakia has no backward areas

“What progress has been made in the development of economically backward areas?”

When socialism prevailed in Czechoslovakia, it was necessary to close the great gaps in the economic development of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. By planned economic and particularly investment policy, the socio-economic levels of the Czech and Slovak Socialist Republics were brought much closer together.

Considerable progress was made in the industrialization of Slovakia. At the Slovak village of Jaslovské Bohunice, the first Czechoslovak nuclear power station is generating electricity, and is being enlarged. In the early 1980s, construction started of a similar nuclear power station at the Slovak village of Mochovce. On the river Váh, a cascade of hydro-electric power plants was built.

The East Slovakian city of Košice has become a major centre of the metallurgical industry; the steel complex in the city gives jobs to 23,000 persons from the regional capital and its vicinity. There is a large aluminium plant at Ždiar nad Hronom. East Slovakia, once the poorest region of the state, today produces synthetic fibres,

railway cars, automatic washing machines and telephones: The East Slovakian city of Prešov is a centre of research and development of industrial robots and manipulators. The development of agriculture in Slovakia and the growth of the transport network also deserve a mention.

Slovakia's share in the national income of Czechoslovakia rose from the pre-war 19 per cent to 28 per cent in 1981. In the same period, its share in industrial production rose from 8 per cent to 29 per cent, in agricultural production from 24 per cent to 34 per cent. Slovakia accounts for 32.8 per cent of the population of the state. Facts show that the national economies of the Czech and Slovak Socialist Republics have been brought very close to each other.

Differences between town and village

"I would say that life in the village has changed even more than in the town ..."

The quality and way of life in the village has changed substantially in the past few decades. Farmers have joined agricultural cooperatives, thus creating prerequisites for a more effective organization of agricultural production and for use of high-performance machinery. The growth of productivity of agriculture is reflected also in the working and living conditions.

Today, cooperative farmers have much larger incomes than their fathers or grandfathers while they were still private farmers. In 1981, the average monthly net remuneration of a cooperative farmer was 2,343 crowns, which is about the level of net pay of workers and other employees. With the exception of the harvest time, cooperative farmers work five days a week, and have the same right as workers and other employees to paid holidays, sickness benefits, family allowances for dependent children, and old-age, disability and widows' pensions.

During the post-war decades, also housing conditions and the human environment in general changed substantially. Electrification of all villages was completed already in the 1950s, construction of water and sewerage networks continues. The percentage of people receiving water from public utilities rose from 58 per cent

in 1970 to 72 per cent in 1981. Most villages have public lighting systems, and asphalt-surface local roads. Part of the rural population moved to new family houses the equipment of which is comparable with modern flats in towns. Most of the older houses were renovated, and a number of houses in small villages were bought by townspeople and converted for recreational use.

Virtually every larger village has a shopping centre with a broad assortment of food and essential manufactured goods. Health facilities are located so as to make the doctor easily accessible to every village. Almost all central villages have a House of Culture or a club which are centres of various leisure and amateur art activities. Czechoslovakia's rural areas are interlaced by a dense network of bus lines which provide a good connection between all towns and villages in the area.

How are the prices of goods determined?

"Some goods are obviously subsidized, others appear to be higher in price than justified. What is the reason for this?"

Wholesale prices are fixed so as to represent the total of the full production costs of the manufacturer and the profit. Retail prices are then derived from the wholesale prices by the addition of the turnover tax and trade overheads.

Since socialist society does not ascribe prices merely their economic function but takes also their social effect into consideration, the turnover tax is differentiated. The prices of some essential products are lower than would correspond to the sum of the production and trade costs. In a number of cases, certain prices are subsidized from the state budget, to maintain their low level. This is so in the case of milk, for example. Up to January 1982, also meat was subsidized. Similarly, rents are subsidized in Czechoslovakia, fares in public transport systems, and the prices of some cultural values.

Pricing policy is purposefully aimed to influence production and consumption. For a certain time, technical novelties and fashion goods are sold at higher prices, so that manufacturers have an interest in innovation of their production programmes. When apples

were abundant in 1982, quantities of this fruit were sold to works and school canteens at very low prices, to ensure higher consumption.

Development of incomes and living costs

“... I found out that incomes were higher than during my previous visit. But what about prices? Don't tell me they have not been also raised.”

The financial incomes of the Czechoslovak people show a steadily rising trend. From 1975 to 1981, for example, they increased from 292,000 million crowns to 366,000 million. This is an increase of more than 25 per cent. Monetary incomes per household went up from 4,900 crowns to about 5,900 crowns a month.

Wages are the largest item in the incomes of the population. In every 100 crowns of income, 63 crowns come from the pay envelope. From 1975 to 1981, the average gross pay of workers and other employees increased by 17 per cent.

In the period under review, living costs also went up. In consequence of the rising prices of raw materials, other materials and foodstuffs, and particularly because of the costs of fuels and energy, it was necessary also in Czechoslovakia to adjust the retail prices of some kinds of goods. From 1975 to 1981, prices of manufactured goods, including fuels and energy, were raised by 18 per cent, food prices by 6.5 per cent. These price rises, and the higher postal and telephone charges, raised living costs by about 11 per cent.

Despite the considerably worse external economic conditions, Czechoslovakia succeeded in the years from 1975 to 1981 in maintaining the upward trend in purchasing ability, although the growth rate was smaller than previously. Total monetary incomes rose by 25 per cent, average wages by 17 per cent, living costs by about 11 per cent.

In February 1982, prices were raised of some kinds of meat and meat products, cigarettes and other goods, but at the same time, wages, pensions and child allowances were also raised.

Household equipment

"... but more than by the appearance of my native village, I was impressed by the furnishing and equipment of the households..."

Since 1961, whenever a census of houses and flats is made in Czechoslovakia, also the numbers of various appliances in flats and households are ascertained, so that figures are available on the cultural standard of living and on the equipment of households.

According to 1980 figures, there are 4.9 million permanently occupied homes in Czechoslovakia; half of them are in family houses, half in flats. From 1961 to 1980, the percentage of households with bathrooms or showers increased from 33 to 80 per cent. A substantial change occurred in the method of heating: the percentage of households with central or floor heating systems rose from 8.6 to almost 57 per cent. The others have gas, electricity or solid fuel heating.

The rising purchasing power of the Czechoslovak people is also reflected in the sales of various products which make household chores easier or which are used for leisure pursuits. The number of households with refrigerators rose from 13 per cent in 1951 to 87 per cent in 1980, with washing machines from 55 to 83 per cent. While in 1961, TV sets were in 24 per cent of households, in 1980 they were in a full 85 per cent; moreover, the percentage of colour TV sets is constantly rising. Since 1970, also car registrations have been an item in household statistics: the number of households owning a passenger car rose during the 1970s from 18 to 38 per cent.

Environmental protection

"Environmental protection is now a major issue. One asks whether all those fine words about the human environment do not remain only on paper."

Socialist society regards protection of the human environment as an integral part of its efforts to raise the living standard of the people. The state and Czechoslovak enterprises spend large sums every year on the protection of the air, waters, soil and nature

against the adverse effects of the dynamic development of economic activity.

The Czechoslovak state and economic bodies devote extraordinary attention to protection of the air against solid and gaseous emissions, the main source of which are combustion processes. In thermal power stations and industrial and other boiler rooms, devices to trap solid emissions are being installed, reconstructed and modernized. The enterprise Závody vzduchotechnických zařízení Milevsko, manufacturers of air-conditioning equipment, started production of very efficient installations to trap emissions. The intensity of dust fallout has been substantially reduced in the main industrial regions.

The problem of gaseous emissions containing mainly sulphur dioxide is more complicated: after an evaluation of known and available methods, it was decided to test the Soviet magnesite method in Czechoslovak conditions. A 20 MW unit in the Tušimice power station was chosen for the installation of an experimental unit, expected to eliminate 92 per cent of the sulphur dioxide and all ash from the emissions. In the gas works in the North Bohemian city of Ústí nad Orlicí, a device to desulphurize expansion gases is being installed. Another contribution to cleaner air will be the fact that all future increases in electricity consumption will be met by the construction of light-water nuclear power stations. No further coal-burning power stations will be built in Czechoslovakia.

In view of the high concentration of industry and the intensive mode of farming, water protection is a very challenging task. In the 1970s, a number of small cellulose plants whose waste polluted Czechoslovak rivers were closed down. Every year, hundreds of millions of crowns are spent on the building of municipal and industrial water treatment plants. One of the largest installations of this kind is under construction in Bratislava.

Czechoslovak authorities also devote systematic attention to the protection of the human environment against adverse effects of road transport. New city quarters are designed only for access but not through traffic. Ring roads are being built around cities. In some places, earth banks along busy highways protect residential quarters against traffic noise and emissions. Production of methyl-tercbutylether, an additive which reduces lead content in petrol, has been started in Kaučuk Kralupy.

The influence of nuclear power stations

"How is the human environment protected against the influence of nuclear power stations?"

In Czechoslovakia, light-water nuclear power stations of Soviet design are being built. Czechoslovak safety regulations and norms for nuclear power stations are among the strictest in the world. A substantial part of the production costs of equipment and the construction costs are allocated for quality inspection and safety measures and devices.

In Czechoslovak nuclear power stations, the radioactive emissions are separated from the environment by three barriers: the first is the casing of the nuclear fuel, the second the pressure equipment of the primary circuit, and the third the structure in which the primary circuit is situated. Every reactor has a multiple emergency system which ensures that the heat from the reactor is led out in the event of any malfunction.

The gaseous emissions from the nuclear power station are extracted, cleaned by special filters, and only then released through the smokestack. This is constantly monitored by the dosimetrical centre of the plant. If a person stayed a whole year directly in the ventilation smokestack of the nuclear power plant, the radioactive dose to which he is normally exposed in the natural environment would increase by a mere 5 per cent.

All liquid emissions are cleaned within the plant, diluted and released into surface waters. Measurements carried out by the Regional Hygiene Centre in Bratislava showed that where the waste-release canal from the nuclear power station at Jaslovské Bohunice empties into the river Dudváh, the radioactivity level of the water is way below the norm set for drinking water.

All trapped radioactive waste materials are converted into solid form, and stored underground. Burnt-out fuel elements are returned to the Soviet Union for further processing.

Savings, credits and interest rates

"Can Czechoslovak citizens receive loans? How much interest do they pay?"

Persons wishing to obtain a loan make an application at a branch of the State Savings Bank, they are in all towns and larger villages, handle private savings deposits, payments and clearings, and grant credits to private individuals.

Depositors have a choice of deposit books without a notice of withdrawal, with a notice of withdrawal and higher interest rate, travellers' deposit books, and deposit books for savings accounts on which deposits bear no interest but participate in a lottery prize system. Citizens can open a running account or a giro account, and use cheques to pay for larger purchases. The deposits of Czechoslovak citizens in the Savings Bank rose from a total of 64,000 million crowns in 1970 to 179,000 million in 1982. This testifies to their confidence in the stability of Czechoslovak currency and of the price level.

The Savings Bank grants several kinds of loans to applicants. One form are special-purpose loans which the creditor does not receive in cash, but has a major purchase paid for by the bank. The interest on loans for the building of a family house is either 1 per cent or 2.7 per cent, depending on the character of the building, the interest on loans for a cooperative flat is 2.7 per cent, for the purchase of a flat 4 per cent, etc. Loans for consumer goods are granted at 5 per cent interest.

Very advantageous are loans for newly married couples wishing to rent or purchase a flat, or to buy furnishings; the interest is between 1 and 2.5 per cent.

Every year, the State Savings Bank grants loans totalling 10—12,000 million crowns. The present amount of private loans is more than 30,000 million crowns.

Rights and freedoms for all

“What is the situation in Czechoslovakia with regard to civil rights and freedoms?”

The fundamental rights and freedoms of Czechoslovak citizens are enshrined in the Constitution and other laws. Czechoslovakia differs from the bourgeois democratic countries in that the rights and freedoms are not only part of the legal code but that their implementation is ensured by a system of measures of state and economic bodies and social organizations.

The Czechoslovak Constitution states that all power is vested in the working people. These are not mere words. There are no appointed bureaucratic administrative bodies in Czechoslovak towns and villages, districts and regions but elected bodies. Candidates to functions on them meet their voters at public meetings and explain their intentions. Everyone has a say in the selection of candidates. The mandate of a deputy entrusted by the voters to the candidate is not a blank cheque which the member of the representative body can fill in as he deems suitable; throughout his term of office, he is accountable to the voters.

An important superior feature of the socialist concept of rights and freedoms is that it encompasses also social rights, such as the right to employment, to remuneration for the work performed, to rest after work, to health protection and medical care, to security in old age and during incapacity to work, etc. These provisions, too, are not only formal but are projected into everyday life. Socialist society has eliminated unemployment, gives all citizens the opportunity to acquire qualifications, and makes them existentially secure, without having to fear that at fifty, an employee might be regarded as insufficiently productive, or that illness may mean the loss of his job.

The democratic character of life in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic stems also from the fact that the rights and freedoms can be exercised and enjoyed by all citizens without exception. There do not exist any privileged or subordinated nationalities or races. Socialist society gives equal chances to all its members. A young person's prospects do not depend on the father's bank account but on his own abilities, knowledge, creative ability and moral qualities.

Inviolability of the person

"How are citizens protected against unwarranted limitation of personal freedom?"

The process of socialist development created a sound and firm basis to ensure harmony between the interests of the individual and the interests of society. The overwhelming majority of citizens respect the legal code and the norms of socialist coexistence, and never in their lives come into conflict with the law.

Yet also in Czechoslovakia, cases of punishable offences occur. The protection of society against those who violate its laws is based on the principles of socialist humanism, and subjects citizens to only indispensable limitations. This is also evident in the provisions concerning the inviolability of the person.

No one can be prosecuted for other than lawful reasons in Czechoslovakia, and procedures prescribed by law must be used. A decision of a court or a prosecutor is necessary to place a person into custody. The penal code recognizes the following reasons for custody: when it is justified to assume that the accused person will flee and go into hiding, when the identity of the suspect cannot be immediately established, when he is charged with a crime which carries a severe punishment, when the danger exists that the accused person will try to influence witnesses or thwart interrogation in some way, and finally when it is justified to assume that he would continue his criminal activities.

During the preparatory stages of the court proceedings, the decision to remand a person into custody rests with the prosecutor, later with the court. During the pre-trial proceedings, the length of custody must not exceed two months. Only a higher-level prosecutor can extend the period. As soon as the reasons for custody cease, the citizen must be immediately released.

Security bodies can also detain a suspected person, if one or more of the above reasons exist, but the suspect must be released within 48 hours, or handed over to the prosecutor with available evidence.

Freedom of speech and assembly

“Freedom of speech must, of course, have certain limits. How has this been solved in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic?”

The Czechoslovak Constitution states that “freedom of expression on all fields of public life, in particular freedom of speech and of the press, consistent with the interests of the working people, shall be guaranteed to all citizens.” It also provides for the freedom of assembly, and freedom to hold public parades and rallies.

The mass media represent in Czechoslovakia an important platform of development of socialist democracy. About 1,100 periodicals, including 30 dailies, are published in 15-million Czechoslovakia. The total press run of these periodicals is around 2,100 million copies a year. The dailies appear in 4.8 million copies.

Newspapers and periodicals are published mainly by political parties, social organizations, and various cultural and scientific institutions. In this way, the mass media talk daily to millions of people, explaining political and economic questions to them and providing working people with a forum for exchanges of views and experiences, and for criticisms of shortcomings.

As in other countries, also in Czechoslovakia freedom of expression has its limits. For example, in contrast to certain Western countries, it is not lawful in Czechoslovakia to incite war in any way, to propagate war or to support war propaganda. Under the penal code, it is a punishable offence to support or propagate fascism or any other similar movement aimed at suppressing rights and freedoms, or inciting national, racial or religious hatred.

Freedom of religious belief

“I go to mass every Sunday. Will I be able to do so also during my stay in Czechoslovakia?”

In the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, everyone can profess any religious belief and perform religious rites, if this is not at variance with the law. Religious belief or conviction cannot be a reason for

refusal to fulfil civic duties prescribed to citizens by law. Czechoslovak authorities do not inquire whether a citizen is a member of any church. Registration of religious affiliation was discontinued in 1954.

There are 18 churches and religious societies active in Czechoslovakia, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Jewish religious community and various evangelical churches such as the Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians and others. These churches have 28 bishops and more than 4,800 clergymen. The clergymen receive from the state monthly pay, corresponding to the average pay of Czechoslovak citizens. They have the same rights as other citizens, including the right to free medical care, sickness benefits, social security in disability and old age, etc.

There are over 8,200 churches in Czechoslovakia, 5,000 of them owned by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1981, more than 200 million crowns were allocated from the state budget for maintenance and repairs of churches and other church buildings. The churches publish bibles, hymn-books and other publications, as well as 27 various church periodicals. The total enrollment at six theological colleges is 600. The state arranges for optional religious instruction at schools for those pupils whose parents request it in writing.

However, the long, patient enlightenment work has considerably reduced the influence of churches and religious societies on the world outlook of citizens.

Protection of the security and rights of citizens

“How are offenders prosecuted in Czechoslovakia?”

Execution of justice is vested in elected and independent courts, composed of professional judges and people's judges. They are independent in the discharge of their office, and bound solely by the legal order of the state. They conduct the proceedings, which are oral and public, to establish the facts of the case.

The prosecutors oversee the execution and observance of laws and other regulations, both by bodies of the state administration and organizations, and individuals. They supervise prosecution of

nenders, and prepare indictments for the courts.

Criminal proceedings must be conducted so that civil rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, are respected. Under the penal code, the prosecution and the judiciary must establish circumstances testifying against the defendant equally thoroughly as circumstances in his favour. Confession of the defendant does not relieve them of their duty to inquire into the circumstances of the case by all available means.

At every stage of the proceedings, the defendant must be advised of his right to defence. He has the right to be heard about all facts of which he is accused, and to adduce circumstances and facts in evidence. The defendant has the right to choose a counsel for the defence. Persons in custody and minors must have a counsel already at the preparatory stage of the proceedings. Defendants unable to pay for the services of a lawyer are entitled to defence free of charge.

In the course of the 1970s, the crime rate declined substantially. The number of convictions dropped from less than 139,000 in 1971 to 92,000 in 1980. This means that court proceedings are instituted against 0.5 per cent of the population, prison sentences to be served (not suspended) are handed down on only 0.2 per cent of the population a year. About 20 per cent of sentences are passed on persons found guilty of causing road accidents. This ranks Czechoslovakia among those countries with a very low crime rate.

Criticism and rectification of shortcomings

"What are the options of the citizen not satisfied with the way his request or another matter has been dealt with?"

Decisions on the rights, protected interests and duties of Czechoslovak citizens are made in administrative proceedings. The state body conducting them must proceed in accordance with laws and other regulations, to give citizens the opportunity to effectively defend their rights and interests, and to advise them to prevent their interests from being adversely affected during administrative proceedings because of insufficient knowledge of legal regulations.

This is only one side of the matter, however. Socialist society re-

gards criticism as an important instrument by means of which, with broad participation of citizens, the country's problems are analysed, and the best ways sought to resolve them. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia places great stress on the development of criticism and self-criticism because they have a great importance not only for solving problems but also for educating people and for strengthening the moral-political unity of society.

Great attention is being given in Czechoslovakia to criticism, recommendations and complaints. In 1981, state bodies and socialist organizations received 124,000 notices in which citizens recommended more efficient and economical ways of handling various matters, or drew attention to shortcomings.

Repeated comments by citizens have often led to changes of production programmes, redesigning of products, changes in territorial plans, beginning or abandonment of previously planned capital construction projects, or adoption of additional environmental protection measures.

Action on the basis of critical comments and recommendations strengthens the ties between state and economic bodies with the broad public, enhances the protection of the rights and interests of workers, and improves the standard of management.

What falls within the authority of trade unions

"... he told me that without the consent of the works committee, no one can be dismissed from employment."

In capitalist Czechoslovakia, there was a number of trade union confederations. This fragmentation of the trade union movement understandably weakened the position of the working class. The creation of a unified trade union organization after the Second World War substantially strengthened the influence of trade unionists on the political, economic and social life of the country.

Workers and other employees are associated in the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, which has more than 27,000 primary organizations in industrial and other enterprises and establishments. Their membership is in excess of 7 million, i.e. about 97 per cent of all employed persons.

Czechoslovak laws give extensive powers to the trade unions for shared decision-making on a number of matters pertinent to enterprises and protection of the legitimate interests of workers. Through the National Front, the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement participates in the framing of the overall concept of social development. At joint sessions of the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Government and representatives of the Central Council of Trade Unions, questions of cooperation between state, economic and trade union bodies are dealt with.

Works committees discuss with the management of the enterprise questions relating to the creation and distribution of profit, and remuneration measures. Works committees share in the decision-making concerning wage relations between the main categories of workers, rules for distributing among the employees shares from the economic results of the enterprise, conditions under which bonuses can be granted, and introduction of new norms.

Trade unions also share in decision-making concerning the size of the work force of the enterprise, its structure according to professional qualifications, and deployment of workers. The consent of the works committee is necessary when the enterprise intends to give notice to a worker. In the event that the worker to be dismissed is disabled, the consent of the district administrative body is also necessary. The works committee must also approve all decisions for transfers of workers to another job or to another place of work then specified in his contract.

Works committees have also extensive powers in the spheres of sickness insurance, social security and health care for employees, enterprise meals programmes, housing and recreation, as well as in the sphere of health protection and work safety.

Organization of youth and children

"How is Czechoslovak youth organized?"

Young people are associated in the Socialist Union of Youth. This national organization is active in towns and villages, schools and places of work. It has a membership of about 1.5 million young people. Affiliated to the Union is the Young Pioneers Organiza-

tion, with a membership of some 1.5 million children under 15.

Organizations of the Socialist Union of Youth lead young people to everyday participation in the economic, social and cultural development of the country. About 12,000 youth collectives compete for the best performance of duties in various branches of the economy. Young people form groups to look for new possibilities to reduce consumption of fuels and energy. Other youth teams tackle technical problems, and put forward tens of thousands of improvement proposals every year. At schools, the Socialist Union of Youth promotes special activities of secondary-school students, and scientific activities of university and college students.

The Socialist Union of Youth devotes great attention to leisure activities of young people. In hobby and group interest clubs and circles, by means of cultural performances, concerts, exhibitions, discussions and competitions, it contributes to the aesthetic education and the knowledge of young people. The Union organizes competitions of youth creativity, and through various festivals and reviews promotes the growth of young talents. It also organizes various social events including discotheques, balls and youth assemblies; in hobby circles and group interest clubs, it gives young people the opportunity for physical training and sports, tourism and camping. The youth travel agency CKM (Cestovní kancelář mládeže) organizes trips, particularly abroad, at advantageous prices.

The aim of all activities of the Socialist Union of Youth is to contribute to the education of young people, and to meet their interests and needs.

Emancipation of Czechoslovak women

"I was surprised by the large number of women among the deputies."

Under the Czechoslovak Constitution, men and women have equal status in the family, at work and in public activity. It is, of course, not enough to proclaim the principle; conditions have to be created to translate it into practice.

Socialist society started to do so in the field of education and

qualification. Czechoslovak boys and girls have the same access to education. The only exception are training institutions for physically demanding professions which are not open to women. At the gymnasiums (general education secondary schools), girls account for 62 per cent of the students, at specialized secondary schools for 60 per cent, at institutions of higher learning for 43 per cent. At apprentice training centres, girls account for 36 per cent of apprentices. Only a very small number of girls enter practical life with only elementary education.

The rising standard of employment and qualification of the young generation of Czechoslovak women is evident at the places of work where the number of women in responsible managerial functions is increasing. The provisions of the Labour Code and wage regulations make no distinction between men and women. The only exception are provisions forbidding women to be assigned to heavy work, and giving them various allowances, particularly in connection with motherhood and the upbringing of children.

An educated woman with the appropriate qualifications who performs her duties ably at her place of employment has the prerequisites to be an equal partner of her husband. The Czechoslovak Family Act lays down that in the marriage, the husband and the wife have equal rights and obligations. It is their duty to meet the needs of the family according to their abilities and possibilities. There is shared decision-making on family affairs but neither partner needs the consent of the other for employment and work. The equal status of both partners applies also to questions of property.

All this creates good conditions for increasing activities of women in public affairs. In the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, in the National Councils and other elected bodies, women account for about 30 per cent of deputies, and as such do honest, conscientious work to the benefit of society.

The right to work

“Let us assume that because of great changes in demand, an enterprise is unable to sell its products and must close. What happens to the workers?”

Czechoslovakia is an industrially advanced country. From 1948 to 1982, industrial production increased 12fold, and great progress was made also in agriculture and other branches of the national economy. In socialist conditions, it was possible to plan the development of production and services so as to create a sufficient number of jobs for all applicants.

When the Czechoslovak Constitution declares that all citizens have the right to work, it is not a mere gesture or an expression of a wish but reflects the existing reality of the socialist economy. This is proved by the growing number of gainfully employed persons, from 5.5 million in 1950 to 7.4 million in 1981; these figures do not include mothers on maternity leave.

It occurs also in Czechoslovakia that ineffective departments are phased out. In such cases, the enterprise must use the workers thus released in its other departments of plants. If this is not possible, it is the duty of the enterprise to give the workers effective help to find other suitable jobs. Superior bodies can give their consent with the closing of a department only when new jobs have been found for all workers concerned.

Sometimes, it is necessary for them to move. For example in the area of Kladno, the last deposits of coal will be mined at the end of the century. Already today, a new large mine is being built in the vicinity of Slaný near Kladno, in which miners from the closed mines will be given jobs.

Remuneration for work

“How are workers and other employees paid, and where are the highest earnings?”

Man's socialist attitude to work does not form automatically. Conditions for it must be prepared, particularly by effective, planned

wage policy, to ensure that citizens are remunerated according to the quantity, quality and social importance of the work they perform.

Wage regulations in Czechoslovakia have nationwide validity, and are binding both on the employers and the employees and trade union organization. The basic wages of workers are determined according to the professions. Both hourly and piece wage forms are used in remuneration. The basic salaries of managerial workers, technicians and clerical workers are based on qualifications, practice and the importance of the work. In addition to basic pay, workers and other employees who successfully carry out the tasks assigned to them receive also bonuses and rewards. About 80 per cent of the total wage fund is for basic pay, 20 per cent for the non-fixed parts of remuneration.

Observance of the principle of equitable remuneration is ensured by the payment of equal wages for the same work, regardless whether performed in the capital or in a village. Therefore, there are no "cheap" labour areas in Czechoslovakia. Qualification catalogues ensure comparability of various kinds of work between the branches of the national economy, and thus also comparability of remuneration for comparable performance. At the same time, the wage system creates sufficient scope for more distinct differentiation in remuneration according to performance and quality. Individuals and production teams do not work equally well, and it is therefore necessary for those with better performance to earn more than those not capable of working equally well.

Wages register an upward trend. The average monthly wage in the Czechoslovak national economy rose from 948 crowns in 1950 to 2,685 crowns in 1981, when the average pay in industry was 2,772 crowns, in the construction industry 2,926 crowns, in freight transport 3,194 crowns, etc. The highest average wage in industry was in fuels extraction — 4,003 crowns a month.

There is only one mandatory deduction from the gross wage — income tax, averaging 17 per cent of the gross wage. The costs of old-age and sickness insurance are financed from the state budget. In contrast, the remunerations of cooperative farmers are not taxed. In 1981, they averaged 2,343 crowns a month, and were thus virtually the same as the net pay of workers and employees.

The role of collective contracts

“Wage regulations have nationwide validity. What is then the purpose of collective contracts?”

In socialist conditions, the collective contract is not only an agreement on wages, but has a broader character. Also, its new quality rests in the fact that both partners are interested in the development of the socialist organization, or the production branch, as well as in improvement of working, health, social and cultural conditions of the workers.

The works committees of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement conclude collective contracts with the management of the enterprises and supervise their fulfilment. Prior to the signing, the contracts are discussed with the trade union membership. Similar contracts can be also concluded by higher-level economic bodies and trade union bodies. Collective contracts are drawn up for a year, enterprise or branch contracts can be concluded for a longer period, usually for five years. In such cases, they can be supplemented every year.

The contracts spell out the production and other tasks of the works or enterprise, and specify the material needs which will be available for fulfilling the tasks. On behalf of the work force, the trade union organization enters into the obligation to carry out the assignments.

The management of the enterprise is bound by the collective contract to adhere to the wage and working conditions that have been agreed upon. Despite the existence of unified wage regulations, the level of wages can differ in enterprises, according to organization and productivity of labour, the technical standard of products, etc. The contracts also specify the way of distributing financial means which accrue from the economic activity of enterprises, including the way of distribution of workers' shares in the returns.

The collective contracts also contain technical measures to facilitate work, to improve the working environment and work safety, to extend the works meals programme, and to improve health care.

Statutory working hours

“... I did the calculations several times, and the result was always the same: his wife works longer hours than he.”

In 1918, the eight-hour workday was enacted in Czechoslovakia, so that the working week was 48 hours. Nothing was changed during the existence of the pre-war Republic, and only the achievements of socialist construction made it possible in 1956 to shorten the working week to 46 hours.

In the second half of the 1960s, it was shortened again, to 40—42.5 hours. In the mining industry and in round-the-clock three-shift operations, the working week is 40 hours, as a rule five 8-hour shifts. In two-shift operations, the working hours are 41.5 a week, five shifts of eight and a quarter hours. In all other places of work, the working week is 42.5 hours; in a majority of enterprises and institutions, there are five 8.5-hour working days a week.

On principle, Czechoslovak working people have two days off after five days of work. For most of them, this means free Saturdays and Sundays, but in round-the-clock operations in which work continues over the weekend, the days off fall also on other days of the week.

When a man works according to a three-shift schedule, and his wife is for example a clerical worker, it can happen that his working week is 2.5 hours shorter than hers, but there is full justification for this difference in the different demands put on the various professions.

Differences in workdays and working weeks can also stem from overtime work. The actual total is always a little higher than the statutory working time because it includes overtime work; in industry, it accounts for 5.6 per cent of the total hours actually put in. In a calendar year, a worker can be assigned 150 hours of overtime work at the utmost; exceptions can be approved only by central departments with the consent of the trade unions. Workers receive 25 per cent of their wage extra for overtime, 50 per cent more for overtime at night or on their days off.

In assessing statistics on actual working time, it must be taken into consideration that in Czechoslovakia, the average figures are not affected by lay-offs, unemployment, or workers put on shorter hours.

Length of paid holidays

"I intended to invite him but I don't know whether it would be worth his while. How is it with holidays in your country?"

All employed persons at least five months in one job, and who have worked at least 75 days in the calendar year concerned are entitled to a holiday. In some cases, not even the meeting of these minimum conditions is required.

Socialist society considers holidays for the purpose of recreation as a valuable contribution to the regeneration of forces and health. It gives the right to holidays to all workers without exception, not only to workers and other employed persons but also to cooperative farmers.

The basic length of the holiday on full pay is two calendar weeks a year. Employees who have completed five years of employment after they have reached 18 years of age are entitled to three weeks of holidays, those with at least 15 years of employment after 18 are entitled to four weeks. The length of studies, military service and care for small children counts towards the length of employment. The great majority of Czechoslovak citizens over 23 are entitled to three-week holidays, those over 33 to four weeks.

Some categories of workers are entitled to longer holidays. Teachers' vacations are eight weeks, nursery school teachers have six-week holiday. Miners working underground are entitled to one week extra, as are also workers in especially difficult jobs.

For the duration of the holiday, workers receive their previous pay, including their average bonuses and other remunerations. In addition, workers are entitled to time off for examination or treatment in health facilities, in the event of death in the family, moving house, and certain other cases. The employing organization can give a worker time off also for other serious reasons, but in such cases, he receives no pay. He can, however, come to an agreement with the organization that he will work the lost time later.

Disputes between workers and employers

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"Such disputes certainly occur. How are they settled?"

- 1 Socialist society regards work as the prime obligation and at the same time as the prime right and matter of honour of every citizen. It is the duty of organizations to create such working conditions which enable the workers to perform their tasks in the best possible way, and to increase their qualifications. Characteristic for labour relationships in enterprises is cooperation and mutual assistance. When disputes occur between a worker and the employer, they are mostly settled by mutual agreement.

Other disputes are dealt with by special commissions or courts of arbitration. The commissions are set up by the primary organizations of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. The parties can appeal against the decision of the commission of arbitration, and the dispute is then referred to a court.

Some disputes are dealt with by the court from the outset; they are disputes concerning the inception and termination of employment, disputes in which one party is the manager of the organization or his deputy, disputes over remuneration for inventions and improvement proposals, disputes concerning enterprise-owned flats, sickness insurance and social security.

The court proceeds in such a way as to ensure equitable protection of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens and organizations. All parties to the proceedings, i.e. the employer and the employee, are equal before the court.

Social rights of farmers

"I read about the right to holidays but it was not clear to me whether it applies also to farmers."

For the most part, the social rights of cooperative farmers are the same as the rights of workers and other employed persons. For example, old-age and disability pensions for cooperative farmers are calculated on the basis of average pay and length of gainful employment, just as is the case with other workers. Cooperative

farmers also have the same right to sickness benefits, maternity leave, family allowances for dependent children, and to other social benefits.

Also the length of holidays is determined according to the same principles as with workers and other employed persons, and is thus two, three or four weeks, according to the number of years worked. For the length of the holiday, cooperative farmers receive their average earnings, as well as payments in kind if such a practice exists in their agricultural cooperative.

Unions of cooperative farmers organize for members of cooperatives and their family dependents recreational stays in facilities in Czechoslovakia and abroad.

Cultural and social needs

“How do Czechoslovak enterprises create the fund for cultural and social needs, and how do they use it?”

The fund for cultural and social needs exists in all Czechoslovak enterprises, offices and institutions. From its profits, the organization allots into the fund a certain percentage of the total of paid out wages. The percentage depends on the achievement of the planned economic results by the enterprise in the year concerned. Since 1981, the allocations into the fund have been between 0.8 and 2.8 per cent of the paid out wages.

The fund is used to finance the collective needs of the workers of the enterprise, members of their families and pensioners, former employees. The use of the fund is decided jointly by the trade union organization and the management of the enterprise.

Up to 30 per cent of the fund can be used to fully or partly pay the cost of recreation in trade union facilities, to run enterprise-owned recreational facilities, and to pay for workers' holidays abroad. The fund can also be used to pay for transport and accommodation during cultural recreational and weekend excursions, to partly finance the works meals programme, etc.

Within cultural and educational activities, theatre and concert tickets can be bought from the fund, books and periodicals for the works trade union libraries and clubs. Also, workers can receive

loans for building or purchasing a flat or a family house, for the required share payments for a cooperative flat, for furniture, as well as for major building alterations in the flat or in the house.

Forms of trade union recreation

“He spoke about trade union and enterprise recreational facilities. What is the difference between the two?”

The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement organizes three basic forms of recreation for workers and their family dependents: they are selective, enterprise and children's recreation schemes.

Selective recreation is organized centrally by the Czechoslovak Trade Unions, the Central Administration of Workers' Recreation in Prague and the Slovak Administration of Workers' Recreation in Bratislava operate about a hundred facilities with almost 13,000 beds, mainly in mountain resorts, spas and popular centres of summer recreation. They provide high-quality accommodation and services, all daily meals, and opportunities for sports, cultural and social activities.

The Central Administration of Workers' Recreation pays from its budget about half the operating costs of the facilities, and allocates vouchers for holidays to works committees of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement at prices equal to the second half of the operating costs. The works committees can, however, let workers have the vouchers at a still lower price, and pay the difference from the enterprise fund of cultural and social needs. As a rule, workers enjoying selective recreation pay for their holidays in the trade union recreational facility only about 20—30 per cent of the actual costs. At the beginning of the 1980s, vouchers for selective recreation were available for around 600,000 trade union members and their family dependents every year.

In addition, enterprises, cooperatives, institutes and institutions and other organizations own and operate their own recreational facilities, with a total capacity of 200,000. Every year, 2.25 million persons spend part of their holidays in them. The running and use of these facilities is fully in the hands of enterprises and works committees of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement.

Trade union organizations also organize and finance children's recreation in summer and winter vacation camps; every year, about 440,000 children take their turns. The cost is paid partly by the trade union organizations, partly by the parents. Tens of thousands of other children spend part of their vacations in camps run by other organizations.

Social measures

"How are the cultural and social measures to the benefit of the people financed?"

Ever greater sums are being expended in Czechoslovakia on social security, the health service, culture, education and other services for the population. In 1981, these expenditures were almost 148,000 million crowns.

These expenditures are made from the state budget the revenues of which are mainly earnings of the socialist economy, paid into the state treasury mainly in the form of the turnover tax and financial payments by socialist organizations. In 1981, 256,000 million crowns of the total budget incomes of 312,000 million crowns, i.e. more than 82 per cent, were payments into the budget by socialist enterprises and other organizations.

The state budget revenues from the population are smaller: citizens pay income tax, the house tax, the agricultural tax and certain local charges. In 1981, they totalled 42,000 million crowns, i.e. about 13 per cent of the state budget revenues. The revenues from the population were thus less than sufficient to cover the benefits of the pension system. The main source from which social consumption is financed in Czechoslovakia is thus the performance of socialist enterprises.

Items not in the pay envelope

"To what extent does social consumption influence the living conditions of the Czechoslovak people?"

The contents of the pay envelope is certainly not the only criterion of the purchasing power and the living standard of the people. Also social incomes play an important role in the family budgets of Czechoslovak citizens. Some services are available either at subsidized prices or free. In 1981, when the average monthly wage was 2,685 crowns, citizens received values from social resources worth more than 800 crowns a month.

The largest item are monetary incomes which do not come from remuneration for work but whose distribution is of a social character. For example in 1981, citizens received almost 44,000 million crowns in pensions, more than 13,000 million crowns in family allowances for dependent children, and 12,000 million crowns in sickness benefits.

Another important item are services provided either at reduced prices or entirely free of charge. The state spends every year about 19,000 million crowns to finance the education system and over 14,000 million crowns on the health service and social welfare institutions. About 9,000 million crowns is spent annually on subsidies which maintain the low level of fares in the public transport system, and 5,500 million crowns to maintain the low level of rents and other living charges. Grants to cultural institutions amount to about 6,000 million crowns a year.

The last group of items of social consumption are products which are available either free, or at minimum cost. They are medicaments, medical supplies and schoolbooks, on which the state spends about 8,000 million crowns a year.

Not even a long illness can make a man destitute

“How are sickness benefits calculated, and how long does a person receive them?”

In Czechoslovakia, every employed person declared as temporarily unfit to work by the doctor receives sickness benefits instead of pay. The benefits are calculated on the basis of net daily pay, including all bonuses, extra pay and remunerations.

The sickness benefits are scaled according to the total length of employment: 60 per cent of net pay for workers employed less than a year, 70 per cent for those employed from 1 to 5 years, 80 per cent for 5 to 10 years, and 90 per cent of net pay for workers employed longer than 10 years. For the first three days of incapacity, sickness benefits are lower (50, 60, 65 and 70 per cent of net pay, respectively.) The sickness benefits are paid from the first day of the incapacity until the worker is either declared fit to work, or disabled; the maximum length is one year from the beginning of incapacity. The maximum sickness benefit is 108 crowns a day.

However, exceptions are possible. When a medical commission comes to the conclusion that the worker will regain his capacity to work and return to his job, it can decide to continue paying him sickness benefits also in the second year of his illness.

Length of employment and old-age pensions

“How long must a person be employed to become entitled to an old-age pension?”

The amount of an old-age pension is derived in Czechoslovakia from the length of employment, average pay and the job category. For this purpose, professions are divided into three categories: the first are miners, air crews, seamen and members of certain other professions, the second category contains jobs in which work is performed under difficult conditions, the third category are all other professions.

Men in 1st category jobs are entitled to old-age pensions on reaching the age of 55 to 58, in other jobs at the age of 60. The

right to old-age pensions for women originates according to the number of children they have brought up: at 57 for women who have not brought up children, at 56 for those who have brought up one child, at 55 for two children, at 54 for three or four children, and at 53 for women who have brought up more than four children.

For the full old-age pension, employment of at least 25 years is required, but also persons not meeting this condition are not left without means of subsistence. On reaching the age of 65, they are entitled to the so-called proportionate old-age pension.

Old-age pensions basically average 50–60 per cent of the adjusted previous average pay. The average is calculated for the last five or ten years of employment, depending on what is more advantageous for the pensioner. Added to the basic sum is, according to the category, 1–2 per cent of the adjusted average pay for the 26th and every other additional year of employment. A person who worked from his 18th to his 60th year will thus receive an old-age pension equalling 67 per cent of his adjusted average pay, former workers in the first and second categories of jobs even more. The widow's pension is 60 per cent of the old-age or disability pension of the husband at the time of death.

At the beginning of the 1980s, newly granted old-age pensions averaged about 1,500 crowns a month, disability pensions around 1,400 crowns, and widows' pensions about 800 crowns. Pensions are exempt from tax. The maximum pension limit is 3,000 crowns but not exceeding 90 per cent of average pay.

Care of the disabled

“What is the social security of disabled persons, and what are their employment prospects?”

Full disability pensions are drawn in Czechoslovakia by persons who are not capable of performing any systematic work because of their permanent condition of disability, and those whose condition would worsen if they were employed. Also those citizens receive disability pensions who can hold a job but entirely inadequate to their previous abilities and to the social importance of their

profession. Also entitled to pensions are those disabled persons who can perform a job only under extraordinary conditions — such as the blind and persons with serious orthopaedic defects.

Disability pensions are calculated in a similar way to old-age pensions. Years remaining for a man to reach 60 and for a woman to reach 57 are added to the actual length of employment. The partial disability pension is half of the full pension, and is granted to those citizens who can, because of their condition, perform a job only in conditions specially created for them and whose earnings are therefore lower.

The measures make it possible for disabled persons to be gainfully employed without losing their right to a full or a partial disability pension. The law provides that the organization must not refuse to employ a disabled person recommended by an administrative body for a vacancy which is on the list of jobs for persons with diminished working ability.

The disabled enjoy several social benefits, such as cheaper or free season tickets for municipal transport services.

Single persons in old age

“It happens that people remain alone when they grow old. How are such cases provided for?”

In 15-million Czechoslovakia, the number of people over 65 is about 1.9 million. Statistics show that about one-third of them live in households with their children and their families, one-third are married couples living in their own flats or homes, one-third, i.e. about 600-700,000 persons, live alone.

They all receive old-age, disability, widow's or other pensions. Of course, money does not solve all the problems of old people. For this reason, a system of services has been set up to provide assistance to about 50,000 senior citizens. Social workers do household chores for them, do their shopping, and take care of their laundry. Hot meals are delivered by vans to the recipients of these services, who pay only part of the actual cost of the meals.

Since the early 1970s, homes with resident social workers have been increasing in number in Czechoslovakia. They are houses

with small maisonettes, rented to old people, both married couples and solitary persons, who move in with their private belongings, so that they continue to live among things to which they are accustomed. There are resident social workers in the homes.

Old people requiring more systematic care are accommodated in pensioners' homes. At the beginning of the 1980s, there were about 580 social care facilities in Czechoslovakia, with some 68,000 beds, primarily in pensioners' homes.

Social aid for families with children

“What social measures exist to help families with dependent children pay the increased costs of living?”

Logically, families with children have higher living costs than childless couples, and for this reason, socialist society helps meet the essential needs of children.

Aid is given already to expectant mothers: when, because of transfer to easier work, their earnings decline, the difference between their old and new pay is made good from social security funds. During the 26-week maternity leave, mothers receive benefits amounting to 90 per cent of their former net pay.

After the birth of the child, mothers who are employed or are family dependents of an employed person, receive a lump sum grant of 2,000 crowns, to help them pay the extra purchases connected with child birth, following which the parents are entitled to monthly family benefits. After an adjustment made in February 1982, these benefits are 180 crowns a month for one child, 610 crowns for four, etc. Parents are entitled to these benefits until the child leaves school. The reason why the benefit for one child is relatively low is that on the birth of the first child, one of the parents is entitled to a substantial reduction in income tax.

On the expiry of the basic maternity leave, employed women can ask for an extension, until the day on which the youngest child reaches the age of two. Those women who care for at least another child during this additional leave, receive state maternity benefits of 600 crowns a month.

For those parents who received from the State Savings Bank

a loan for newlyweds, for a flat or furnishings, 2,000 crowns is written off from the debt, and 4,000 crowns on the birth of every other child.

Many families are entitled to rent reductions on the birth of the child: in apartment houses, the reduction is 5 per cent for one child, 15 per cent for two children, 30 per cent for three children and 50 per cent of the rent for four or more children. Children under 10 are entitled to free use of all public transport in Prague, and no fare is paid for prams.

The situation of single mothers

“... she said she would rather have no husband than a bad one. But the situation of a single mother cannot be easy...”

About 95 per cent of children are born in wedlock in Czechoslovakia, 5 per cent are children of unmarried mothers. They have the same social rights as married mothers, and in some respects, are entitled to certain advantages.

The social legislation is based on the assumption that a woman living alone (widow, divorced woman, single mother) has greater difficulties in her duties as a mother than married women. For this reason, their social rights have been adjusted.

While employed married women are entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave, single employed mothers are entitled to 35 weeks. Employed married mothers are entitled to 3—6 days with pay when they have to take care of a family member in illness; single mothers can draw this benefit for 6—12 days. When a single mother cares for a child under three, she cannot be dismissed by her employer, and in the event that her place of work is closed down, a new, suitable job must be found for her.

With regard to the parents' obligation to provide for their children, the law does not differentiate between children born in or outside wedlock. The alimony obligations of fathers of children born to single mothers are determined by the court which can, if necessary, instruct the employer of the father to deduct the appropriate sum from his pay, and remit it to the mother. In

addition, it is the duty of the father of a child born out of wedlock to pay alimony to the single mother for the duration of one year, and to pay part of the expenses connected with pregnancy.

The needs of single mothers receive constant attention by the social departments of Czechoslovak administrative bodies, which also help them to solve various problems if the need arises.

The Czechoslovak health service

“Where do citizens go in the case of illness? And what is the procedure when they need hospitalization?”

The Czechoslovak Constitution provides that all working people are entitled to health protection and medical care. The state provides this by a system of preventive care, the entire health service including a network of health and social facilities; all preventive and medical care is provided free of charge.

All Czechoslovak citizens employed in larger enterprises are registered with the works doctor. Works health centres — large enterprises have complete polyclinics — exist in about 2,500 organizations, and are staffed by 5,000 doctors. Health services for other citizens are provided by district medical practitioners. In towns, several doctors usually work in one health centre, which usually includes also consulting rooms of specialists in children's and women's diseases, dentists' offices, laboratories and dispensaries. The number of these outpatient facilities is about 3,000.

The duties of district and works doctors also include prevention, in addition to routine examinations and treatment. When the patient's state requires it, they refer him to a specialist in the nearest polyclinic, or to one of the about 230 hospitals.

The number of doctors is about 50,000, which means one doctor for some 300 people. At the beginning of the 1980s, health facilities had 191,000 beds, of which 120,000 were beds in hospitals, the rest in various specialized medical institutions.

Preventive health care

“How is the stress on prevention projected in the Czechoslovak health service?”

The socialist health system is built on the assumption that diseases and injuries must not only be treated but also prevented. Therefore, great attention is being given in Czechoslovakia to preventive health care. An important role is played by the hygiene and anti-epidemic service which has organizational units in all districts of the country, to carry out checks for any contamination of the air, water, soil, buildings and facilities. Hygiene is in the forefront of attention in schools, shops, restaurants and similar establishments. The laboratories of the hygiene service test samples of foodstuffs, meals, air and water. Health authorities are required to make reports on projects of new buildings, and on various measures adopted by enterprises and state bodies, to enable preventive steps in time against anything that might adversely affect public health.

Special protective measures, mainly vaccination and inoculation, are taken by health authorities to combat the spreading of communicable diseases. This does not only concern compulsory vaccination of children; in the course of the 1970s, almost all Czechoslovak citizens were vaccinated against tetanus. Regular X-ray examinations make it possible to immediately spot new cases of tuberculosis in the initial stages, which naturally facilitates treatment. Another mass campaign was carried out among women as part of a cancer control and prevention campaign.

Works doctors play a major role in prevention; their duties include inspections of work places, with special attention given to the working conditions of women, particularly mothers of small children, and workers with reduced capacity to work. Preventive examinations are carried out to reduce the incidence of general as well as occupational diseases.

Mother-and-child care

"She told me that she has to visit the doctor twice a month with her child, even when there is nothing the matter with it. Can that be true?"

The Czechoslovak health system devotes special attention to the health of mothers and children. All women from the fourth month of pregnancy are under regular medical supervision. Expectant mothers are examined at least eight times by a gynaecologist. Those employed in jobs not suitable for pregnant women are transferred to another type of work. With negligible exceptions, all children are born in hospital.

The care for the health of children is of a high standard in Czechoslovakia. All children in their first year of life are examined 22 times, on an average, and receive treatment by paediatricians in one of the 2,500 advisory centres and children's departments of polyclinics. There are more than 12,000 beds in the children's wards of Czechoslovak hospitals. Also children in crèches, nursery schools and those attending elementary schools are under constant medical supervision.

There is compulsory vaccination of all children against tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, polio and measles. Vaccination against smallpox was compulsory until the disease was eradicated worldwide. Polio has been completely eradicated in Czechoslovakia, cases of diphtheria and whooping cough are sporadic. Vaccination of girls against German measles is being introduced experimentally.

While in 1950, infant mortality (children under one) was 78 per 1,000, it was only 17 per 1,000 in 1981. Also the mortality rate of children of pre-school and school age significantly declined.

Czechoslovak spas

"Which spas in Czechoslovakia are the most used?"

There are 58 spas in Czechoslovakia, 35 in the Czech and 23 in the Slovak Socialist Republic. Mineral springs in these localities,

radioactive waters and peat deposits are used for effective therapeutical procedures. The spa facilities are equipped with advanced devices for examinations and treatment, such as for physical, water and electrotherapy, and include also diet kitchens, libraries and reading rooms, lounges, pools and sports facilities.

The more than 130 spa sanatoriums have a capacity of 35,000. Karlovy Vary tops the list in the number of patients — up to 70,000—80,000 take the cures every year, mainly for diseases of the alimentary tract and metabolic dysfunctions.

The capacity of three large spas is about 50 per cent smaller; they are Františkovy Lázně, for patients suffering from rheumatic and women's diseases, and disorders of the blood circulation, Mariánské Lázně, offering effective treatment of diseases of the kidneys and the urinary tract, and Piešťany, famous for the treatment of rheumatic diseases.

There are several spas with more than 10,000 patients a year: Poděbrady (cardiovascular diseases, children's diseases of the circulatory system), Jáchymov (rheumatic and nervous diseases, metabolic disorders), Luhačovice (diseases of the respiratory and alimentary tracts, diabetes, obesity), Bardějov (alimentary tract, metabolism, respiratory tract) and Trenčianské Teplice (rheumatic and nervous diseases).

The patients in Czechoslovak spas

"I saw many people receiving spa treatment who certainly were not 'the cream of society'. What is the explanation for this?"

The patients in Czechoslovak spas can be divided into several groups. Most of them are sent there for treatment under the sickness insurance system, and there is no great financial outlay involved. Only a small number of patients pay for spa cures, and of course, one can meet many foreigners among them.

Spa treatment represents a form of sickness insurance benefit, extended to workers, employees, cooperative farmers, pensioners and family dependants of these categories. Recommendation for treatment in a spa is made by a doctor who has the patient under

his systematic supervision. The final decision rests with the works committee of the trade union organization, and in the case of workers from small enterprises, the district administration of the sickness insurance system.

Employed persons are required to devote their holidays for treatment in spas, but some diseases constitute an exception, and the patient receives sickness benefits while receiving treatment. This applies to patients recuperating after operations, after heart attacks, etc.

The number of patients in Czechoslovak spas increased considerably after the war, from around 200,000 a year in the early 1950s to 450,000 patients at the beginning of the 1980s. As a rule, workers account for 68 per cent of patients, pensioners for 12 per cent; for them, treatment is provided under the sickness insurance scheme. About 6 per cent are paying patients, 10 per cent are foreign patients, and the rest are school children sent to spas on the recommendation of school doctors and paediatricians.

Achievements of Czechoslovak medicine

“What progress has been made and what are the major achievements of Czechoslovak medical science?”

In the course of the post-war decades, a network of biological, biochemical and medical centres has been created within the framework of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, faculty hospitals and other medical establishments; they contribute significantly to the advancement of medical science and to the protection of public health.

Czechoslovak scientists do intensive research in molecular biology, particularly in molecular genetics. Their work has produced internationally recognized findings which have thrown a new light on the nature of tumourous cells. Medical research has also developed new techniques of gene manipulation, and created prerequisites for future use of genetic engineering.

Just as researchers in other countries, also Czechoslovak scientists conduct work in the field of heart support and replacement. There are 16 cardio-stimulation centres in Czechoslovakia, and at

the beginning of the 1980s, the number of persons with implanted pacemakers was about 6,000. In a research centre in Brno, an artificial heart of Czechoslovak design is being tested on animals. Czechoslovak researchers have also mastered the technique of fertilization of the female ova outside the organism. In the autumn of 1982, the first Czechoslovak test-tube baby was born.

Czechoslovak specialists are also perfecting various surgical techniques. At the Medical Faculty in Hradec Králové, new methods have been developed of preserving mobility of injured or otherwise affected joints by reconstruction of the surface by bony or cartilage bone material. At the Palacký University in Olomouc, the first Czechoslovak laser scalpel has been developed.

Progress has also been made in efforts to improve examination and diagnostic methods. In the Institute of Physiology in Prague, an instrument was built to register and measure vascular reflexes, the flow of blood and other factors; the device is now in use also in leading institutions abroad. Achievements in pharmacology could also be listed here.

How to get a flat

"I saw whole city quarters of new housing. Who gets the new flats, and how?"

In the 1960s and 1970s, housing conditions in Czechoslovakia improved considerably. The number of permanently occupied flats rose from 3.8 million in 1961 to 4.9 million according to the 1980 census. Also, the quality of housing was raised. These changes are due mainly to new construction. From 1965 to 1980, tenants moved into 1.7 million new flats, and blocks with hundreds of thousands of substandard flats were demolished.

Some of the flats in newly built houses fall within the so-called communal construction; the investors are municipal and local administrative bodies, and the projects are financed from the state budget. Administrative bodies allot these flats to larger families, as well as citizens forced to vacate their former flats for reasons of public interest, for example flats on the demolition list.

The largest investors in housing construction are housing coop-

eratives. State grants cover 40—50 per cent of the construction costs, the rest are bank credits and membership shares of the future tenants. The shares amount to about 25 per cent of the cost of the flat. Payment of the share gives the member of the housing cooperative the right to a flat allocated him.

The cooperatives make available some of the flats they build to enterprises and other organizations which allot them to their employees, or to workers they wish to sign up. They loan them money for the membership share; when the employee remains in the enterprise for a stipulated time, he does not have to repay the loan.

The building of villas and family houses is done on a private basis. Owners receive from the state a grant equal to about 20—30 per cent of the cost of self-help construction of a family home. Builders also receive credits from the State Savings Bank at advantageous terms.

Rent restriction

“What social protection is accorded to tenants in Czechoslovakia?”

Rents in apartment blocks are calculated according to regulations which have remained in effect, without any change, since 1964. Flats are divided into four categories; the criteria are the heating systems and appointments. Rent is based on a certain sum for every square metre of floor space, according to the category of the flat, and according to use (living rooms and other parts of the flat). Tenants pay extra for certain kinds of technical equipment, the amount of rent is reduced for deficiencies.

The owner of the house cannot change the rents which can be raised only when the quality of the flat is substantially improved, for example by the installation of central heating. At the beginning of the 1980s, the rent for a centrally heated two-room flat, with a kitchen and all conveniences was around 360 crowns a month, which was only a little more than 13 per cent of the average monthly pay in 1981. The rent for a two-room flat, without central heating but with all conveniences, averaged 121 crowns, i.e. 4.5 per cent of the average monthly pay.

In cooperatively built and owned houses, rents are determined on the basis of the repayment of the bank credit, and maintenance and operating costs. Members of housing cooperatives must also create a reserve fund for major repairs in the future. The average rent in cooperative flats was more than 200 crowns a month, without heating and hot water supply, estimated at another 150 crowns.

The right of using a flat can be revoked only by a court or an administrative body, and only in cases strictly defined by law — such as when the tenant does not pay the rent, when the block is to be demolished in the public interest, etc.

Development of sciences under socialism

“How does the socialist system facilitate scientific progress in Czechoslovakia?”

In what is today Czechoslovakia, the Royal Bohemian Society of Science was established already in 1784, but under capitalism, scientific research developed in only a few principal theoretical disciplines. Institutions of higher learning were the main centres of scientific activity, the number of state research institutes was small; they were staffed by only 2,000 persons. Only several, financially strong concerns, such as the Škoda Works, ČKD, Baťa and a few others, had their own specialized laboratories.

The victory of socialism brought about revolutionary changes in this sphere. The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was founded in 1952, with only 45 scientific centres staffed by 2,000 persons. At the beginning of the 1980s, it had — together with the Slovak Academy of Sciences — 128 scientific centres with a work force of almost 15,000. The financing of basic research was taken over by the state. Gradually, research centres were built in the various economic branches, and in large enterprises.

Socialist conditions created prerequisites for the plan-based development of science and research, and for coordination of scientific work both on the national and international scale. Czechoslovakia is not a large country, which makes its participation in world science and research especially remarkable.

Organization of scientific and research work

“How is the division of labour organized in science, applied research, development and construction?”

Socialist society places great stress on scientific-technological development. There are 400 organizations and about 1,900 departments engaged in scientific, research and development work. At the beginning of the 1980s, they were staffed by more than 180,000 persons, i.e. 2.4 per cent of all gainfully employed citizens. Between 3.5 and 4 per cent of the national income is spent on research and development every year.

The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Academy of Sciences do mainly basic research. In 1981—1985, 18 target projects are in the centre of attention; the aims include wider use of domestic raw materials, development of electronics, and solution of other important projects. Basic research is also carried out in scientific departments of Czechoslovak institutions of higher learning.

Applied research and development of new technical methods, technology and products are conducted by specialized research institutes and other centres, subordinated to ministries and other central bodies, as well as by research, development and construction departments of productive economic units and enterprises. They are guided in their work by five-year and annual plans of technical development.

The remarkable creative potential of the Czechoslovak scientific-technological base is evident from the fact that every year, domestic inventors receive 6,000—7,000 certificates of authorship and patents.

Contribution to world science

“With what have Czech and Slovak scientists enriched world science and technology?”

Czech and Slovak scientists have contributed many new findings and discoveries to world science and technology. Gregor J. Mendel

(1822—1884) was a prominent personality in genetics, Jan Evangelista Purkyně (1787—1869) was an internationally renowned physiologist, Aleš Hrdlička (1869—1943) is one of the founders of modern anthropology, Jan Jánský (1873—1921) discovered the existence of blood groups.

Other scientists and inventors are authors of important technical discoveries: Prokop Diviš built the first lightning conductor in 1754, earlier than Benjamin Franklin. Josef Ressel designed the ship propeller and used it to propel a boat in 1812, Franz Josef Garstner is the author of the project of the first horse-drawn railway on the European continent, between the Bohemian town of České Budějovice and Linz, Austria. In 1881, František Křižík demonstrated to the public his improved arc lamp. Viktor Kaplan (1876—1934), professor at the College of Technology in Brno, invented a new water turbine.

The discovery of polarography is often regarded as the greatest Czechoslovak contribution to world science; Jaroslav Heyrovský received the Nobel Prize for his discovery in 1959.

Czechoslovak biochemists have succeeded in synthesizing substances which are similar to components of nucleic acids; these preparations arrest the growth of leukaemic cells.

The importance of many Czechoslovak inventions is confirmed by the fact that they are being used, on the basis of licences, in the world. Several countries purchased Czechoslovak licences for the manufacture of spindle-less spinning frames and other textile machines. The method of continual crystallization of combined chemical fertilizers is used in several countries, as is the manufacturing technology of the medicament Ketazon. Also used in the world is the Czechoslovak method of producing concentrated nitric acid, several types of penicillin, etc.

International cooperation in science and research

“How does Czechoslovak science participate in the international division of labour?”

The Czechoslovak scientific, research and development base does not have a capacity sufficient for solving all pressing tasks. For this

reason, Czechoslovakia participates intensively in international cooperation in the sphere of science and technology, particularly within cooperation between the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The cooperation rests in a division of research projects, the findings of which are then made available to research workers in the other CMEA countries. Whenever necessary, joint research and construction teams are created.

On the basis of multilateral and bilateral agreements, Czechoslovak scientific and research institutions cooperate on several hundred tasks. Czechoslovak and Soviet experts are working on 400 projects in 1981—1985. This cooperation is expected to produce more than 150 new kinds of devices, 20 new kinds of materials, and dozens of complete sets of technical and project documentation.

Also institutes of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences participate in this cooperation. In the first half of the 1980s, 55 institutes are working on 155 common projects of basic research, including projects concerning biophysics, protection of nature, medicine, physics of solid substances, chemistry, and other scientific disciplines.

Within the Interkosmos programme, Czechoslovak science is taking part in peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Since 1969, Soviet rockets have been launching into orbit satellites also with Czechoslovak instruments aboard. In 1978, the satellite Interkosmos 18 launched into a separate orbit the Czechoslovak satellite Magion. Czechoslovak cosmonaut Vladimír Remek made a space flight in March 1978 aboard the Soviet spaceship Soyuz 28. A number of experiments prepared by Czechoslovak scientists were carried out aboard the orbital station Salyut 6 by Remek and his Soviet colleagues.

Czechoslovak scientific institutions develop cooperation also with scientific and research centres in non-socialist countries, and are active in numerous international scientific organizations.

The education system

“What is the nature and the purpose of the restructuring of the Czechoslovak education system?”

Almost one in every four Czechoslovak citizens is a pupil, an apprentice or a student. The enrolment in schools of all levels is about 3.7 million. Socialist society regards the school as the most important educational institution which, together with the family, imparts to children and young persons fundamental knowledge about the world and society and shapes their character.

In June 1976, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia approved a document on restructuring of the education system. Its ideas were later formulated in legal provisions. It is a long-term project, the implementation of which was started in the 1970s and continues in the 1980s.

Completion of the project will deepen the democratic character of the Czechoslovak education system. School attendance is lengthened; all children who started school on September 1, 1976, and later have a ten-year compulsory attendance, which creates prerequisites for phased introduction of complete secondary-level education for all young people, of whom ever larger sections will be able to seek admission to university or college.

At all levels, the curriculum is being adjusted to meet the needs of the present development of society. For example, the aim of the gymnasiums (general education secondary schools) is to prepare students both for further study at institutions of higher learning and for employment. The range of subjects is being expanded by optional specialized subjects. At specialized secondary schools, narrowly specialized subjects are being phased out and replaced by wide-profile fields of study. The institutions of higher learning are expected to give students the level of education required by the present stage of scientific-technological development.

It is the task of all schools to deepen the connection between the learning process and their educational function. Czechoslovak schools bring up young people in the spirit of peace, opposition to aggression, oppression and injustice, colonialism and racism, in the spirit of the principles of humanism, social justice and noble moral principles.

For children of pre-school age

"How are the children of employed parents cared for?"

Czechoslovakia has an extensive network of facilities for pre-school children, the most important being crèches and nursery schools. They are not intended to be just "depositories" for children of employed parents, but educational institutions. Children learn in them the rudiments of knowledge and skills, the ability to express themselves is developed and their interest in playing and games is promoted. They are also taught social behaviour and discipline, aesthetic perception, good taste, independence, habits of hygiene and health care.

Crèches are for children from three months to three years, whose mothers are employed. There are day crèches (in which the children spend only the hours of their mothers' work day), week crèches (in which children are cared for from Monday morning to Friday afternoon), and crèches open also on weekends and holidays. The capacity of crèches in Czechoslovakia is rising: while it was 22,000 in 1950, it exceeded 90,000 in 1981.

Nursery schools are for children from three years of age to the start of elementary school attendance. These facilities are also predominantly for children of employed mothers but other children are also admitted when capacity permits. There are also day schools, from which the children are picked up by their parents after their work day, and week schools, from which parents take the children home only on their days off. Also this type of school grew considerably in the past decades. The number of children attending nursery schools rose from 256,000 in 1950—1951 to 707,000 in the school year 1981—1982, which means that 85 per cent of children between three and five go to nursery school.

Those children who do not attend nursery school regularly, go to their preparatory departments at the age of five, to learn proper behaviour and orderliness, and to get used to the collective; in this way, they are prepared for elementary school attendance.

Shorter elementary school, longer attendance

"Elementary school attendance has been shortened to eight years, compulsory school attendance lengthened to ten years. Isn't it an inconsistency?"

Obligatory school attendance in Czechoslovakia used to be nine years. Children from six to fifteen attended nine-year elementary schools. The reform of the educational system, enacted in 1978, lengthened obligatory attendance to ten years.

Under the new concept, children from six to fourteen attend the eight-year elementary school, divided into two levels. From the first to the fourth year, children are taught by one teacher. From the fifth to the eighth year, subjects are taught by teachers who are specialists in their fields. All school-leavers continue for two years at one of the three types of secondary schools. Completion of the second year marks the end of the ten-year compulsory school attendance.

The first type of secondary school are the four-year gymnasiums at which studies are concluded by a final examination. These schools provide general secondary-level education. More than 300 gymnasiums also have classes for employed students. Enrolment in gymnasiums rose from 50,000 in 1950—1951 to more than 182,000 in 1981—1982.

Another type of secondary school are the specialized schools — for vocations in industry, construction, agriculture, economy, the health service, etc. They end with final examinations and offer secondary-level professional education also to employed students. Enrolment rose from 90,000 in 1951—1952 to more than 124,000 in 1981—1982.

The new education system has included also apprentice training institutions into the system of secondary schools; these institutions prepare young people for industrial professions.

Of the total number of boys and girls who complete elementary school, 40 per cent continue to study at gymnasiums and secondary specialized schools, 60 per cent receive training at apprentice institutions.

Apprenticeship and leaving certificates

“Is it true that in Czechoslovakia, some apprentice training programmes end with final examinations like secondary-school studies?”

When the Czechoslovak education system was reformed in 1978, also the apprentice training system was reorganized. The former apprentice schools are being transformed into a unified network of vocational institutions which have the character of secondary schools.

According to this concept, apprentice schools were divided into three groups: in two-year schools, those young people end their ten-year compulsory school attendance who receive training for simpler industrial professions with the main stress on manual skills. It is assumed that about 15 per cent of boys and girls will attend these schools.

The largest number of young people attend three-year apprentice training institutions which provide professional education in more demanding professions. School leavers can attend two years of evening courses and be eligible for final examinations at secondary school level.

Four-year apprentice training programmes prepare young people for professions which require thorough theoretical knowledge and in which work is performed in workshops equipped with advanced machinery, for which not only manual skills but also knowledge is necessary. These professions include machine tool and numerical-control machine setters, aeroplane mechanics, electricians etc. In these four-year study programmes, young people receive complete secondary-school education and leave the school with both apprenticeship certificates and leaving certificates.

At the end of 1981, enrolment at apprentice training institutions was 410,000; more than 45,000 were young people attending four-year schools with secondary-school status.

Special schools

"I heard the terms 'special school'. What does it mean?"

The Czechoslovak education system provides also education for children with impaired health, an expression of the humanism of socialist society. There are more than 1,100 schools in the country for boys and girls requiring special attention. Their more than 6,000 classes are attended by about 75,000 pupils. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1 : 10 in these schools.

Some of the special schools are for children with defective eyesight and hearing, with speech impediments or various physical defects. The schools are well equipped with technical and other teaching aids, to make it possible for the pupils to follow the teachers' instruction and to acquire education.

There are also special schools for children with lower learning capability who would not be able to keep up with the pace of normal schools. The curriculum is suitably adjusted and the classes are small, so that teachers can give individual attention to the children. Also, special training fields have been chosen for the pupils from special schools, to ensure that they are trained for suitable jobs within their capacity.

The highest link of the education system

"What opportunities are open to Czechoslovak young people wishing to study at university or college?"

The origins of higher education in what is today Czechoslovakia date back to the Middle Ages. Charles University in Prague was founded in 1348, as the oldest institution of higher learning in Central Europe. In 1465, a university called Academia Istropolitana was established in Bratislava, and in 1707 an engineering school, from which the Czech College of Technology developed later, was founded in Prague.

Higher education had its greatest period of growth in the socialist state. At the beginning of the 1980s, there were 36 universities and colleges in Czechoslovakia, with 113 faculties. They include

seven universities, 10 technical colleges, six art colleges, and colleges of economics, agriculture and education. To be a seat of higher learning is no longer the privilege of large cities: colleges and faculties are in 20 Czechoslovak cities.

There are regular and intramural study programmes at Czechoslovak institutions of higher learning; the former can have the form of day classes or evening classes for employed students. During the admission procedures, grades in the secondary school are taken into consideration, as well as the results of the admission examination and the moral qualities and civic profiles of applicants. The length of study is four to six years.

The number of students rose considerably in the post-war decades. In 1950, enrolment in day classes was less than 39,000, and in 1981, their number was more than 156,000. In the same period, the number of employed students rose from 6,000 to 42,000. In accordance with the needs of the Czechoslovak economy, more students are now being admitted to technical colleges.

Study ends with final examinations. Graduates from colleges of technology, economics and agriculture receive an engineering diploma (Ing.), graduates from medical faculties the degree of doctors of medicine (MUDr.), graduates of veterinary faculties are doctors of veterinary medicine (MVDr.). University graduates can apply for admission to the rigorous state examinations, to earn various degrees, such as doctor of jurisprudence (JUDr.), doctor of natural sciences (RNDr.), doctor of philosophy (PhDr.), and others.

It is possible to study externally one or several subjects at Czechoslovak universities and colleges, but this study does not count towards a degree.

Access to education

“... the question is, of course, whether all parents can afford to send their children to university.”

The social structure of Czechoslovak students is approximately the same as the structure of the population. This is true not only of secondary schools but also of university and college faculties. More than half of all students are from workers' or farmers' families.

This shows that socialist society has created realistic conditions for young people to acquire an education according to their knowledge, ability, talent, interest and state of health, regardless of the situation and property of their parents.

Tuition at all schools is free, there are no registration and tuition fees to pay, and no examination fees. Construction and operating costs of schools are financed from the state budget. At elementary schools and all types of secondary schools, pupils receive all textbooks and the main requisites.

Students at gymnasiums, specialized secondary schools and higher schools who are from families with low per capita earnings receive social grants. For university students, it can amount up to 450 crowns a month. From the second year of studies, university and college students receive proficiency grants, the amount of which depends on the academic performance in the previous year, and can be up to 400 crowns a month. At selected faculties, students also receive for every successfully completed year of study a lump-sum preferential grant of 1,000 crowns. The grants are paid from the state budget, and total about 400 million crowns a year.

Students pledging to work after graduation for at least five years in a certain enterprise or region receive from their future employers grants of 800 to 1,000 crowns a month, in the last two years of study. Students can also apply for credit from the Savings Bank, and to start repaying it after the first two years of employment.

The parents whose children study receive monthly family benefits for the duration of study or vocational training, up to the date on which they reach 26 years of age.

State care for pupils and students

“How is it with meals and accommodation of schoolchildren and students?”

Lunch programmes exist virtually at all schools in Czechoslovakia. The number of school canteens is about 13,000; they prepare meals for more than 700,000 children in nursery schools, 1.3 million pupils in elementary schools, and some 100,000 students of gymnasiums and secondary specialized schools. The total is thus 2.1 million, i.e.

about 80 per cent of all schoolchildren and students.

Children receive a warm meal for lunch at school, usually consisting of soup, a meat dish, and either dessert or fruit. The cost to parents is between 2.50 and 4 crowns for one lunch, which is less than the cost of the food. The rest, including the construction and the operating costs of the school canteens, is paid from the state budget. Binding recipes and menus are based on national eating habits and requirements of correct nutrition.

University students can eat in campus dining rooms, where they pay 2.60 crowns each for one meal — breakfast, lunch or supper — so that their food bill comes to about 240 crowns a month. For students who cannot commute, accommodation is provided in halls of residence where they pay 50 crowns a month for lodging in a two-bed room. At the beginning of the 1980s, some 84,000 students lived in halls of residence, i.e. about 57 per cent of the total number enrolled in day classes. There are also other facilities for secondary-school students who do not live permanently in the town where they go to school.

Foreign students in Czechoslovakia

“It was obvious from his complexion that he was a foreigner. And yet I saw him going towards the College of Agriculture.”

Admission of foreign students to Czechoslovak universities and colleges has a long tradition. In the post-war years, their influx increased, and became stabilized in the past two decades at 3,000—4,000 students.

They are mostly interested in study at technical colleges at which the usual foreign enrolment is about 1,600. At universities, particularly at medical faculties, the number averages about 1,000 foreign students, at economic colleges more than 200, and at agricultural colleges around 400. In the 1960s and 1970s, 450 persons from 57 countries, mainly developing countries, studied at the Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Prague.

Foreign students are admitted to Czechoslovak Institutions of higher learning on the basis of obligations stemming for Czecho-

slovakia from bilateral international agreements. The applicant must not be over 30 and his previous education must be comparable to that obtained at Czechoslovak secondary schools.

Foreign students have the same rights and obligations as their Czechoslovak colleagues, both with regard to tuition, use of study facilities and libraries, and sports and cultural facilities, as well as medical care. They live in college dormitories, and take their meals in campus dining rooms. Before they begin to attend classes, they are required to take a special course in Czech or Slovak.

Reports on the careers of the foreign graduates from Czechoslovak universities and colleges show that they hold responsible executive or administrative positions as public officials or in enterprises and institutions, or that they are successful doctors and teachers.

Use of qualifications

"The growing number of graduates raises the question whether all find appropriate employment."

Graduates from Czechoslovak schools find jobs corresponding to their education and professional training; this applies to those who have completed their attendance at apprentice training institutions, gymnasiums, specialized secondary schools as well as to university and college graduates.

When an apprentice passes the final examinations, the organization to which he was apprenticed is obliged to conclude a contract with him for work corresponding to the qualification he has obtained. It cannot happen in Czechoslovakia that a young skilled worker remains unemployed.

Enterprises and other organizations send to schools lists of vacancies. The available jobs are offered by the school to the future graduates, who can apply for any of them. The enterprises choose from among the applicants, and conclude contracts with those they decide to hire. Those not chosen apply for another job from those offered, but can look for employment also directly, without the mediation of their school. The number of graduates and available jobs is basically balanced so that all students find jobs in line with their profession.

All graduates can apply for jobs according to their wishes and on their own volition. All will find suitable employment, even though not all according to their original wishes. Some find jobs in another town or in another region than they originally wanted, but such is life.

The law makes it an obligation for employers to provide graduates from secondary and higher schools adequate professional practice, to ensure that they gain experience and knowledge necessary for a good, reliable performance of their duties, and for further professional development.

Culture accessible to all

“What has the socialist state done to make cultural values accessible to the people?”

In the years of socialist construction, cultural life flourished in Czechoslovakia. The extensive network of cultural facilities and subsidies by the state have given access to cultural events to all.

Most cultural establishments are subsidized from the state budget or by socialist organizations. A ticket for a performance in a state theatre, sold for 14 crowns, carries a state subsidy of 60 crowns. In a similar way, state orchestras, museums and galleries are supported by the state. Economic organizations spend large sums to defray the deficits of their Works Clubs.

The democratization of cultural life in Czechoslovakia is also evident by the fact that it is no longer the privilege of a few large cities but that artistic values are accessible to spectators and audiences in all parts of the country. Every Czechoslovak region has at least one permanent theatre, the ensemble of which regularly performs in district towns.

It is the aim of socialist society to ensure that citizens do not remain mere passive consumers of artistic values, but participate also in creative endeavours, for which conditions are being created. There are about 9,000 clubs in Czechoslovakia, to which around 32,000 ensembles and groups are attached, with 550,000 members. They include dramatic ensembles, amateur chamber and symphony orchestras, folk music and brass bands, dance bands and pop

groups, choirs, dance ensembles and others. This amateur art activity is promoted by the organization of various competitions and festivals.

Reading and literature

"In all households I visited, I saw bookcases, often with quite a library on the shelves."

Incontestably, Czechoslovakia is one of the countries whose people are avid readers. Evidence of this is provided by annual figures on the production of Czech and Slovak publishing houses, on book sales, and the large number of people using the services of libraries.

The number of published books rose from 3,800 in 1950 to more than 7,000 titles a year on the threshold of the 1980s. The total number of copies is between 90 and 100 million, which means an average of 24—26 new books every year for a family of four. The annual total of belles-lettres is about 20 million, and some 18—19 million copies of books for children. The rest are textbooks, specialized, scientific and socio-political literature, music and other publications.

The range of the books includes both works by domestic authors and translated literature. The largest number of translations is from Russian, followed by English, French, German and Italian. The high literary qualities of books by Czech and Slovak authors are testified to by the high number of their translations abroad — several hundred every year. At the top of the list is Julius Fučík's book, "Report from the Gallows", which was published in about 80 countries, often in several editions.

Czechoslovakia has a unified network of mutually cooperating libraries. The most important among them for the general public are People's Libraries, which exist in virtually every village. About 2.6 million readers use them regularly, taking out about 85 million books every year. Available in the People's Libraries are some 50 million books.

A rich cultural life

“What has changed in the network of Czechoslovak cultural establishments in the period of socialist construction?”

Socialist society has created favourable conditions for all-round development of culture and the arts. There is an extensive network of cultural facilities in the country which offer the public artistic experience, broaden their horizons and provide opportunities for amusement.

Radio and television have grown substantially: there are now 112 radio transmitters which broadcast, in addition to one national programme, two Czech and two Slovak programmes, regional broadcasts, programmes for other nationalities in Czechoslovakia, and foreign-language broadcasts. The annual total is 125,000 broadcasting hours a year. There are 18 radios for every ten Czechoslovak households, of which about 600,000 also use the wire broadcasting service.

Regular television broadcasts were started on May 1, 1953. Over the years, a network of 70 TV transmitters was built to make the first TV programme receivable throughout the territory of the state. The second TV programme was started on a regular basis in 1973. The annual number of broadcasting hours was 6,500 at the beginning of the 1980s. Most of the programmes are in colour, the SECAM system is in use. There are 11 TV sets for every 10 Czechoslovak households.

The dynamic growth of television inevitably affected theatre and cinema attendances. Czechoslovakia has 79 permanent theatres, the annual number of theatre-goers is 8.5—9 million, films shown in 3,000 cinemas are seen by about 80 million people a year. Czechoslovak film studios make 1,600—1,800 films every year, including 46—48 full-length feature films.

Socialist conditions provide wide scope for a rich music life. Concerts by the 23 state orchestras attract more than 1.3 million music-lovers a year. In addition, there is a large number of other professional orchestras in Czechoslovakia — symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, and others.

Czechoslovak art galleries contain large collections of major

works of art, both old and contemporary. Every year, they arrange some 2,500 exhibitions which draw 4—6 million visitors. Czechoslovakia's almost 250 museums are visited by 12—16 million people every year.

Care for historical monuments

"I saw carefully preserved castles, churches and other buildings. Who finances their maintenance?"

Czechoslovak national monuments authorities have about 40,000 buildings and other structures of historical and artistic value in their care, including more than 2,500 castles, châteaux and forts. The most important of them are protected as national cultural monuments; this status has been given to the castles in Prague and Bratislava, Karlštejn near Prague, and to several others. During the tourist season, more than a hundred castles and châteaux are open to the public, and are visited by 5—6 million tourists every year.

Four hundred Czechoslovak towns have historically valuable centres, preserved in their original appearance. In 35 towns, they have the status of protected urban reservations; they include the historical centres of Prague, Bratislava, Tábor, Cheb, Domažlice and Levoča, for example. In 160 Czech and Slovak towns, the so-called monument zones have been created.

Socialist society regards historical and cultural monuments as an important part of the country's cultural heritage, and spends about 750,000 crowns a year, from the state budget, on their maintenance, reconstruction and use for public purposes.

Leisure pursuits

"How much free time do people enjoy in Czechoslovakia, and what are the main leisure pursuits?"

Surveys carried out by Czechoslovak statisticians show that employed men work more than nine hours a day, including overtime, extra work, and work on their own plots; the average time of

working activity for women is almost 8.5 hours. Other necessary activities, including commuting to work, preparation of meals, household chores, vehicle maintenance, personal hygiene, care for children, shopping and other tasks take up more than three hours in a man's daily schedule, and around six hours of a woman's.

The weekly volume of free time is between 29 and 32 hours for employed men, and 20—23 hours for women. The most frequent leisure activities are culture-related: men spend 12—13 hours a week watching television, 3—4.5 hours reading newspapers and books, attending cultural events and amusing themselves outside their homes. The figures for employed women are relatively lower.

Men and women spend three hours a week with friends, and 1.5 hours outdoors. Next on the list is time spent in restaurants, gardening, exercises and sports. Two per cent of the people have collecting as a hobby, more than three per cent photography.

Many Czechoslovak families spend their weekends in their cottages or converted village houses, or on their gardens, usually with small shacks in them. The number of privately owned recreational cottages is estimated at half a million, i.e. one for every ten households. Most of the cottages are owned by city people; about a quarter of Prague families own one. The recreational cottages offer great opportunities for gardening and other hobbies, as well as for sports and other recreational activities. At the weekend, also thousands of lodges owned by enterprises are always full, and on Saturdays and Sundays, large Czechoslovak cities are half empty.

Czechoslovakia and international tourism

"I saw for myself that domestic tourism is extensive in Czechoslovakia, but how is it with foreign trips of Czechoslovak citizens?"

In the past decade, Czechoslovak authorities have done a lot to create good conditions for the further growth of the tourist trade between Czechoslovakia and foreign countries. Visa procedures were simplified, and under agreements with neighbouring countries, new border crossings were opened.

Over the years, Czechoslovakia has become a frequent destina-

tion of foreign tourists, whose number rose from 3.5 million in 1970 to 19.4 million in 1978, a post-war record. In subsequent years, the influx of tourists fell a little, and was 17.7 million in 1981. Most of the foreign tourists who come to Czechoslovakia are from the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union, the FRG, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Austria. Tourists from socialist countries spend 7 days on average in Czechoslovakia, visitors from other countries 5 days.

The number of trips abroad made by Czechoslovak citizens also grew steadily: while 3.8 million Czechs and Slovaks travelled abroad in 1970, the annual figures were 9—11 million at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. The largest number went to Hungary, the GDR, Poland and Yugoslavia, among the non-socialist countries mainly to the FRG and Austria. The average length of stay of Czechoslovak tourists in socialist countries is influenced by the large number of short trips, and is 5 days, while stay in other countries averaged 15 days.

About half of Czechoslovak tourists travelling abroad do so on trips arranged by travel agencies, half on their own, mostly in their cars.

Growth of accommodation capacities

"I would like to know whether something is being done to increase the capacity of Czechoslovak hotels."

The growing influx of foreign tourists placed high demands on the accommodation facilities. Large sums were allocated by the state authorities for the construction of new hotels, motels and other tourist trade facilities. The number of beds in them was raised from 119,000 in 1970 to about 200,000 in 1981.

A number of new hotels were built in the past ten years in Czechoslovakia; they included large hotels in Prague, Bratislava and Brno, medium-size hotels in other Czech and Slovak cities, and various facilities in mountain resorts, such as at Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatras and at Pec pod Sněžkou in the Giant Mountains. In addition, a number of spa facilities were completed, for example in Karlovy Vary, Jáchymov, Třeboň and other Czechoslovak spas.

Some of the new hotels were built by Yugoslav and Hungarian construction firms.

In spite of this, the problem of temporary accommodation of foreign tourists has not been completely solved, and construction of new tourist trade facilities continues also in the 1980s. Since most of the visitors coming to Czechoslovakia usually want to spend at least a part of their stay in Prague, hotel construction in the capital has been given priority.

Conditions for motorists

“What are the conditions for foreign tourists who travel to Czechoslovakia by car?”

Czechoslovakia has a relatively dense network of hard-surface roads. The three largest cities — Prague, Brno and Bratislava — are linked by a 317-km motorway; other motorways are under construction. Filling stations sell two kinds of petrol the 90-octane Special, and the 96-octane Super. Numerous motor camps are located along all main roads and in areas especially attractive for tourists.

The highway code is based on international conventions, and regulations are basically the same as in other European countries. The speed limit in towns and communities is 60 k.p.h., on motorways 110 k.p.h. and on other roads 90 k.p.h. The speed limit for motorcycles is 80 k.p.h., for lorries under six tons 80 k.p.h., for heavy lorries 70 k.p.h.

Public Security (police) patrols enforce the observance of the highway code regulations; for violations, motorists can be fined on the spot, up to 200 crowns. Those unable to pay have their driving licences impounded, and get them back at the District Traffic Inspectorate upon proving that the fine has been paid. Illegally parked vehicles which constitute an obstacle to traffic can be towed away. Drivers who cause an accident involving material damage are fined, those responsible for a road accident in which someone is injured or killed are prosecuted for causing bodily harm through negligence. Motorists with alcohol in their blood system must not drive. Breathalyzer tests must be completely negative.

Both domestic and foreign tourists can rent passenger and other types of cars in Czechoslovakia, under similar conditions as in other countries. The car rental firm, Pragocar, is based in Prague, and has branches in all larger towns. In terms of the number of available cars, Pragocar is one of the largest car rental companies in Europe.

Nature is for everyone

"How is nature protected in Czechoslovakia against harmful effects?"

Foreign visitors know from their own experience that there are large areas in Czechoslovakia in which the natural environment is remarkably preserved. This is the result of long-term, systematic efforts of state bodies and social organizations.

The highest degree of protection is being accorded to national parks. The best known are in the High Tatras, in the Low Tatras and the Giant Mountains. The fourth national park extends in north-west Slovakia, close to the Polish border. In addition, there are several protected areas, in which — in contrast to the national parks — a certain degree of economic activity is permitted. Smaller areas with natural values have been given the status of state natural reservations. Legal norms extend protection also to 300 species of animals and 110 plants.

Forests cover more than 35 per cent of Czechoslovakia's territory. They are owned by the state, and with only a few exceptions are open to the public. Visitors can freely pick forest produce but must behave so as to avoid damaging forest growth.

The right to hunt is the privilege of hunting associations which issue permits to their members and guests. The average amount of game killed by Czechoslovak and foreign hunters is 26,000 deer, fallow deer and moufflon a year, more than 100,000 roedeer, about 20,000 wild boar, and several hundred thousand hares and pheasants. Hunting associations also catch game for export.

Fishing licences are issued by fishing associations. The annual catch is between 16,000 and 18,000 metric tons, mostly carp, but also trout, pike, perch and others. Most of the catch comes from

large fish-breeding lakes operated by the State Fisheries. The catch from other waters, including rivers and brooks, is about 4,000 tons a year.

Physical training and sport

"In what way does society promote physical training and sport?"

Czechoslovak authorities regard physical training and sport as an important part of man's harmonious development, because of their favourable influence on public health, physical fitness of citizens, and worthwhile leisure pursuits. The socialist state creates good material and technical conditions for physical training activities.

The need to improve physical fitness is recognized in the education system, and physical training is an obligatory subject at all its levels. All new schools have gyms and other well-equipped sports facilities.

The main centres of physical training are sports organizations called physical training units (clubs), associated in the Czechoslovak Physical Training Union. At the beginning of the 1980s, there were more than 9,000 such units in Czechoslovakia, with a membership of 1.9 million persons — children, young people and adults. The units are divided into departments and sections, the former for tourism and basic and recreational physical training, the latter for sports. Working in the sport sections are 44,000 coaches and trainers, and some 60,000 referees and other officials.

The socialist state gives financial grants to physical training organizations, to supplement their receipts from sports events and membership dues. Thanks to this aid from the state budget, clubs can employ paid coaches, maintain and enlarge facilities, and improve their equipment.

The state also finances the top-performance sports centres, in which the most experienced coaches train the most talented and best sportsmen, for whom such material conditions are created in which to best improve their international-level performance.

The most popular sports

"I saw the Czechoslovak ice-hockey team play here on two occasions. Which sport is the most popular in your country?"

It is difficult to precisely gauge the popularity of the various sports, but statistics show that in terms of the number of clubs and members, football ranks first: about 550,000 members in almost 6,000 clubs, which is 29 per cent of the total membership of Czechoslovakia's physical training units. Football is also first in the number of coaches (8,300) and referees (10,300), as well as in attendances.

Ice-hockey is second, with 70,000 registered members of 940 clubs. Third are aquatic sports, with 48,000 members, handball with 46,000 is fourth, track and field with 41,000 members fifth, and basketball with 39,000 members sixth.

Also popular is basic physical training, with some 500,000 registered members. Once every five years, they perform at Czechoslovak Spartakiads, large-scale events of synchronized gymnastics.

MISCELLANEA

Unique phenomena created by nature remain unchanged for centuries. Records, the product of man's endeavour, changed many times in the post-war years of socialist construction. The following are some of the figures, records and values which illustrate Czechoslovakia's natural conditions and result of the creative work of the people.

Nature

— The highest mountain in Czechoslovakia is Gerlachovský štít in the High Tatras — 2,655 metres. The lowest point is on the river Bodrog at Streda nad Bodrogom in East Slovakia — a mere 93.8 metres above sea level;

— The 1,138-metre Mt. Klepáč in the Kralický Sněžník Mountains on the Bohemian-Moravian border is the watershed of the drainage areas of the North, Baltic and Black Seas;

— The deepest gorge is Záskočie; it is 263 metres deep, and lies in the Low Tatras in Central Slovakia. A greater tourist attraction is the 163-metre Macocha Gorge in South Moravia;

— The longest river is the 433-km Vltava; second is the Czechoslovak section of the Labe (Elbe), which is 396 km long, the Váh (392 km) and the Morava (358 km);

— The Danube has the biggest flow: in 1979, its flow in Bratislava averaged 2,329 cubic metres per second;

— The largest natural lake is Černé jezero (Black Lake) in the Šumava mountain range in south-west Bohemia; its area is 18.4 hectares. The deepest is the Velké Hincovo pleso in the High Tatras — 53.2 metres;

— The highest temperature, 39.8 degrees Centigrade, was recorded on July 5, 1950, in the South Slovakian town of Komárno. The lowest temperature, minus 42.2 degrees Centigrade was recorded on February 11, 1929, in the South Bohemian village of Litvínovice;

— The hottest mineral spring is the Vřídlo in the West Bohemian spa of Karlovy Vary; its water has a temperature of 72 degrees Centigrade.

Area and population

— The largest of Czechoslovakia's ten regions is Central Slovakia — 17,977 square kilometres of the country's total area of 127,881 sq. km;

— The most populous region is South Moravia, with 2.04 million inhabitants, more than 13 per cent of the total population of 15.3 million;

— The largest Czechoslovak city is Prague, its capital; its population in 1980 was almost 1.2 million. Bratislava is second with 381,000 people;

— The line between the northernmost and southernmost points of Czechoslovakia measures 468 km, the line between the westernmost and easternmost points is 767 km long;

— It is a distance of 326 km from the Czechoslovak border to the nearest sea: from Šluknov in North Bohemia to the bay of Szczecin in the Baltic Sea; the distance between Vyšší Brod in South Bohemia and the Adriatic is 332 km.

Industry

— The Czechoslovak enterprise with the largest work force is the Škoda Works in Plzeň, which employs 46,000 people. The second largest is the Klement Gottwald iron and engineering works in Ostrava, with a work force of over 40,000;

— The Škoda Works in Plzeň has the largest production hall — 260 by 85 metres, and 50 metres high. The steel structure of the hall makes it possible to use 450-ton cranes. The foundations of the tempering pit are 30.5 metres under the floor of the hall. The deepest mines in Czechoslovakia are in the area of Příbram in Central Bohemia. In some places, uranium ore is mined there at a depth of 1,700 metres, where the temperature of the rock is 40 degrees Centigrade;

— The deepest coal mine, 1,328 metres, was opened at Zbýšov in South Moravia in 1981;

— The deepest oil wells were sunk in South Moravia and West Slovakia — up to 6,000—7,000 metres;

— The largest European kaolin deposit is in Kaznějov in West Bohemia; the capacity of the local plant is in excess of 260,000 tons of kaolin a year;

— Until last year, the largest-capacity Czechoslovak hydroelectric power station was at Dalešice on the Moravian river Jihlava. Its capacity of 450 MW was surpassed by the 660 MW hydroelectric power station on the river Čierný Váh in North Slovakia, completed last year;

— The largest smokestacks, 300 metres high and with a diameter of 28 metres at ground level, are at the thermal power stations Tušimice, Vojany, Nováky and others;

— The largest Czechoslovak automobile plant, in terms of the value of production is Tatra-Kopřivnice; its annual production is about 15,000 heavy-duty lorries, powered by air-cooled engines;

— The passenger ship OL 400, built in the shipyards in the South Slovakian town of Komárno, is one of the largest products of the Czechoslovak engineering industry. Designed as a floating hotel for cruises on rivers and lakes, the vessel is 136 metres long, and carries 400 passengers and a crew of 81;

— The fastest electric locomotives of Czechoslovak manufacture are the 8,000 kW engines ČS 200 which pull express trains on the line from Moscow to Leningrad. Built in the Škoda Works in Plzeň, they have a maximum speed of over 200 k.p.h.

Agriculture, water, forests

— Wheat is the most widely grown cereal in Czechoslovakia, usually on 1.1 million hectares, i.e. 22 per cent of all fields. Barley is second on the list;

— The largest grain silo was erected in the Central Bohemian village of Milín; its capacity is 66,000 tons;

— The largest cowshed is in Svobodné Heřmanice in Bruntál district, North Moravia; it stables 2,100 dairy cows;

— The largest man-made lake on Czechoslovak territory is the Lipno Dam on the Vltava in South Bohemia. Its area is 4,870 hectares. The biggest reservoir in terms of quantity — up to 720 million cubic metres of water — is that formed by the 550-metres long and 91 metres high Orlík Dam on the Vltava;

— Spruce accounts for 45 per cent of all coniferous trees in Czechoslovak forests which cover 35 per cent of the area of Czechoslovakia; beech is the most common deciduous tree, 14 per cent of the total;

— The total area of fish lakes is 53,000 hectares; the largest is Rožmberk in South Bohemia, which has an area of 489 hectares.

Transport and telecommunications

— The busiest railway line is from Ústí nad Labem in North Bohemia to Česká Třebová, and through the Slovak towns of Žilina and Košice to the Soviet border; between Choceň and Česká Třebová, the daily traffic in both directions is 270 trains;

— The road bridge, built at the South Bohemian village of Žďákov over the Orlík Dam reservoir, has a span of 330 metres — 41 metres more than the Rainbow Bridge over the Niagara Falls. The roadway of the steel bridge is 541 metres long, and runs 50 metres above the surface of the lake, and 110 metres above its bottom;

— The largest ship of the Czechoslovak merchant fleet, the Vítkovice, is 210 metres long; its gross tonnage is 24,326;

— The 340-metre mast of the television transmitter Krašov in West Bohemia is the highest in Czechoslovakia;

— The first two-level motorway and railway bridge in Central Europe is under construction in Bratislava. The lower level of the 461-metre steel bridge will carry a double-track electric-traction railway line, the upper level will be a four-lane motorway.

Culture

— The largest cultural establishment in Czechoslovakia is the Palace of Culture in Prague. The building, with 108,667 square metres of usable floor area, has a capacity of 6,500 occupants in its congress hall which seats 3,000, four other halls, 31 smaller rooms, and 2,300 others. Several restaurants seat 1,700;

— Albatros, the Prague publishers of children's literature, operates the largest readers' club in Czechoslovakia. It has more than 500,000 members aged 7 to 15, for whom some 40 books in 1.2 million copies are published every year;

— The most visited castle is Karlštejn in Central Bohemia, in which some 300,000 sightseers are taken on guided tours every year. Hluboká Castle in South Bohemia attracts almost the same number of tourists.

The largest

— newspaper is the daily of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Rudé Právo; its circulation is almost a million, and on Sundays appears in a much larger number of copies;

— department store in Czechoslovakia is Kotva in Prague, with 56,000 square metres of floor space, of which 22,180 square metres is sales area. The department store has a six-level underground car park, and is staffed by 1,800;

— stadium is the Strahov Stadium in Prague, venue of the Spartakiads. Its inner area is 300 metres long and 200 metres wide, the capacity is 240,000 spectators.

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